

# THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

D.R. O'Connor  
Lysaght

A MERCIER ORIGINAL  
PAPERBACK



## **The Republic of Ireland: A socialist Rosetta Stone**

I first read Rayner Lysaght's book *The Republic of Ireland* in the 1970s. In the event of his recent death I sat down to read it again.

It was tough going in the 70s and it's a major read today. The book is extremely dense. From a different field of study it reminds me of Lenin, in that, when you read a paragraph, you find that you have to go back and read it again two or three times in order to gain an understanding of the full meaning.

There is a reason for the density. Most Irish historiography up to that point had been written as accounts, with the author signaling political orientation through their selection of facts. Rayner, in a continuity of the tradition of James Connolly, produced a class analysis of Irish society but continued with a detailed account of actors and events. The result is a dense text, but also a wonderful reference work, where every step in analysis is buttressed with endless examples of the playing out of class struggles.

Yet the book remains on the margins of historiography. In part this is because Rayner, despite his characteristic absentmindedness and bookishness, was not an academic, but a revolutionary, and was never fully accepted into Irish academia.

However this is not a sufficient explanation.

Since the publication of *The Republic of Ireland* a number of academics have written detailed accounts of the Irish counter-revolution. Their work is also sidelined and a torrent of revisionist history has been produced to justify the current phase of reaction.

Every intellectual expression requires a material base in society. In Rayner's case that base was the 1968 New Left in Ireland and his association with the Fourth International.

That current was never strong in Ireland and is today weaker still. Everyday discourse is utterly hostile to class analysis and revolution. Even the left writers, looking back at the events of the 60s and 70s, display a total incapacity to understand the times, or to step away from today's reliance on identity politics and soft liberalism. Many participants in the '68 events have developed amnesia about what they once believed and said. This process has even eroded Rayner's seminal work on the Limerick Soviet, now downgraded by current leftists to a clap-happy unity of workers and union bureaucrats.

Yet in *The Republic of Ireland* what shines through is the continuity of the class struggles and the continuity of capitalist interests.

The book is at its strongest in its overview. It shows that the revolutionary socialist potential of the workers, of the small farmers, the landless labourers, was far from exhausted following the rising but was subject, over the development of the state, to on the one hand, ongoing attacks by the church and state, and on the other the unwillingness of the labour and union leaderships to step forward as an opposition to the new capitalist state.

Rayner Lysaght charts a course through the prehistory of the new state, the Rising, the counter-revolution, the consolidation of the new state, the war and postwar societies and the modern Ireland of Europe and transnational capital.

Throughout these phases the same forces operate.

The factions of Irish capitalism, the church, the state bureaucracy produced by melding the imperial and local civil servants, small farmers and petty bourgeois and the workers.

What is astonishing is how familiar the post Good Friday landscape is. Rayner never gave the current settlement the time of day and would have agreed with the old saw about the past not only not being dead in Ireland, but not even past.

Today *The Republic of Ireland* is little read and we have to thank Rob Marsden, of the archive website Red Mole Rising who has converted the text to an ebook. Thanks also to those friends and comrades of Rayner's who contributed to the project.

The revolutionary environment that made Rayner's book possible has largely evaporated, but the work lives on and as a socialist Rosetta Stone, will find its place in the future resurgence of working class struggle.

**John McAnulty, September 2021**

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# *The Republic of Ireland*

AN HYPOTHESIS IN EIGHT CHAPTERS AND TWO  
INTERMISSIONS

BY

D. R. O'CONNOR LYSAGHT

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*D.R. O'Connor Lysaght 1970*

*This book is dedicated to  
the memory of my father*

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## CHAPTER ONE

# THE DESTRUCTION OF IRISH SOCIETY AND THE RISE OF IRISH NATIONALISM (400-1847)

*'I hate all Monarchs and the thrones they sit on  
from the Hector of France to the Cully of Britain.'*

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester

### I

#### *Original Sin*

Ireland's geography was Britain's opportunity. The two small islands' relative positions caused them to have relations in the first place. They decided that these relations should be too close and yet not close enough: that under colonialist conditions the stronger power should interfere with the weaker, but that its interference should never become complete.

At the break-up of the Roman Empire in the West, such relations favoured Ireland. First, it attacked Britain with arms. Then, more successfully, its culture and peculiar form of Christianity gave it a hegemony over its neighbour and, thence, over most of Europe.

But the fragility of the latter arrangement facilitated its destruction by the European monarchs with the Pope's blessing, in a manner known also to Sicily, Prussia, the Levant and, indeed, England itself. For the feudalists the forms of the Roman civilization ensured their authority over their subjects.

Why should Irish society be so obnoxious to monarchs? The answer is that, during its 'golden age,' the chiefs were general factotums to their tribes (or tuaths) under the formal authority of the greater chiefs, or kings. This was formulated consciously in a system of non-autocratic law that constituted a juridical challenge to the Roman theory.

But apart from this, Irish social institutions must be understood, because confused memories of them helped justify the most successful struggle of Irish nationalism. At this time, a view of early Irish society as 'primitive communism' was held, most conspicuously by James Connolly. Later, with post-treaty disillusion, a reaction set in and it became customary to emphasize the aristocracy and class divisions of Ireland's early Christian period. Both versions were correct enough for their sponsors' purposes. What concerns us is that Ireland was, at this time, organizationally pre-feudal. It was hierarchic and slave-owning, yet it maintained in its laws the principles of social flexibility that 'a man is better than his birth.' Its most attractive feature was the high standard of learning that is associated with it.

Despite cattle raids and piratical exploits, it was peaceful, until the ninth century, when the Norse began major military attacks. These wars necessitated a militarizing of Irish society. This meant giving greater powers to the chiefs as military leaders of the tuaths. Even more, it meant, for efficiency's sake, strengthening the powers of the provincial kings. They began, in turn, to look enviously upon the High Kingship of Ireland, which few had coveted before. Mercenary armies replaced the provincial hostings of all able-bodied males. Inter-provincial war became crueler.

The kings were aided negatively by the fact that there were now towns in Ireland. Viking settlers had founded them. Naturally, in seeking order, these looked to the rulers rather than to an attempt to revive the native, and wholly agrarian, social order.

Such a task would have been the less possible in that the old order of law-makers and artists was itself weakened by the ninth and tenth century disorder. Its ally, the Church, was similarly hurt, being divided between its pre-Viking rural monastic system and the new, efficient, episcopal organization championed by the towns. Reform was gradual and the clergy began to look towards Norman England where they saw their estate strong and healthy.

The kings saw in Norman England a centralized feudal state. Such might save them from both their rivals and their subjects, guaranteeing their regional status as vassals of a national landlord.

By 1150, kings and clergy were united in their desire for feudalism. In these circumstances, whether it came from England, or from a provincial ruler, seemed, really, immaterial.

This was a mistake. When it came, English domination proved to have one major basic defect. It was impelled by fear: immedi-

ately, lest the disaffected Earl of Pembroke use Ireland as a base to war against his king: then, that others might so do (as, indeed, they did) and, finally, that a foreign power might do so at a time of England's difficulty.

Fear hallowed greed: not of Irish kings, but of English adventurers (small barons, landless younger sons) whom the King of England encouraged with economic and cultural incentives to keep 'his' other island divided and weak. Occasionally, Irish chiefs were guaranteed their lands as the King's vassals, but such agreements were rarely kept. The final and most ambitious attempt at such a policy (the sixteenth-century 'Surrenders and Regrants') not only tried too quickly to turn tribal potentates into English courtiers of the Tudors, but was jettisoned for a new and compelling reason.

In sixteenth-century Ireland, the English Reformed Church was as foreign as Roman Catholicism both in language and control. In addition, its foreignness was too much that of the occupying power. It could gain little popularity. Accordingly the English Government proselytized by planting Ireland on neo-feudal terms with good Protestants, and, only where necessary, by massacring Catholics.

Outside the northern province of Ulster (the last area planted and, because of this, the planters' most thorough achievement) the Irish reaction destroyed these settlements. Most of the colonists sold up. A large minority let their estates to anyone (mainly, the 'mere Irish') who would take them. There developed a class of Protestant and English (or anglicized) landowners, opposed to a class of Catholic and Celtic tenants. The schism was deepened by the defection of leading Celtic and Celticized families, either in Protestantism and anglicization, or in death, deprivation or exile for supporting one of the sixteenth or seventeenth-century Irish risings.

By 1703, Catholics owned about 14% of all Ireland's land, and due to the anti-Catholic legislation the percentage was to decline steadily over the next eighty years. Outside Ulster, the great bulk of the Irish holdings were tenanted by a Catholic and mainly Celtic tenantry-at-will, owning nothing save its religion and culture (and these despite their rulers). The alien landlord had full powers over his estate. Use of them to increase productivity was made by few of his class. It was a garrison population, conscious of the fact and doubting its ability to justify itself except on its own terms. In such circumstances, estate improvements were doubtful investments. It was easier and more obviously profitable



to get full value for the unimproved land by taking all the tenant's money and leaving him to live off his potato patch.

Thus the inertia of the landlord discouraged thrift in the tenant. Such Celtic customs as 'rundale' (or communal) holdings became, accordingly, further handicaps to productivity. All reasons against early marriage disappeared. Not surprisingly, the British began to discover that the Irish were a lazy, improvident and feckless people.

In addition, they were 'priest-ridden'. The parish priest, tied to this office by vocation, however much persecuted, was at least an educated figure closer to his parish than the landlord. Such peasant education as existed depended on him. But his power was less than was obvious. He provided a break on the peasantry's rebelliousness, if anything. He opposed its aspirations to win back the land and to punish the worst landlords. But even more quiescent than the local priesthood was the hierarchy; the former hoped to weaken the Penal Laws: the latter to appease Britain and, thereby, to win its confidence and, perhaps, even to convert it eventually. The few remaining Catholic landlords tended to side with the hierarchy; when it came to the rub, they could ensure that their lands would remain somehow within the family. Less complaisant were the Catholics of the towns.

If the rural Irish, and the clergy, had suffered from the connection with England, despite greater readiness to be anglicized, the bourgeoisie had gained little. In medieval times, it found itself ground between the recurring disorders of the country and the financial demands of the King. As circumstances developed, so did English policy, but not for the better. In 1494, Poyning's Law stated formally the embryo Irish parliament's direct subservience to the person of the King. In the seventeenth century, this royal power was one of those taken over by the English parliament. It was this body that passed after 1663 the acts that interfered with the one promising commerce that Ireland had built up: that of provisioning the British Army. Throughout the next century, new investment prospects were aborted by the Irish landlords' growing tendency to spend their money outside the country. Such absentee rents grew from £91,652 in 1691 to £1,200,00 in 1785. Irish capitalism failed to outgrow the Guilds. Finally, during the same period, the Penal Laws intensified bourgeois religious divisions by placing definitive limits on Catholic entry to trade and professions.

In the colony of Ulster, the situation was confused by the fact that many of the settlers were Protestant Non-conformists, both

attacked as such by the Government and divided from the Catholics, their rivals for the land. To induce their settlement, the Protestant tenants had received advantageous leases. When these lapsed, they won, instead, in exchange for agreements to pay larger rents (5/- more than elsewhere, for worse land on average), some security of tenure. This was the 'Ulster Custom'.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a Huguenot emigré founded the Ulster linen industry. This strengthened the Ulster Protestants, even if it gave them only the fare to America, and enabled them to develop a small bourgeoisie around the Lagan River Valley in the north-east. The Irish linen trade (which expanded elsewhere in the country) was less discouraged by England than were other ventures; England had no such enterprise of its own.

It was from the towns (especially in Ulster) that the first major breach was made in the eighteenth-century status quo.

## II

### *Grattan's Parliament and Tone's Republic*

In 1758, Britain began to dismantle its legislation against Ireland's cattle trade. The following year, there was established the first feeble Catholic Relief Association. Further British legislation extended the freedom of the Irish provision trade. The growth of Britain's early industrial population necessitated that supplies be guaranteed for as long as possible.

But Britain's economic needs caused conflict with her political interests. Increased prosperity reduced the towns' acceptance of their remaining disadvantages. A Volunteer Force grew at the end of the American War of Independence. In 1782 its potential threat caused the repeal of Poyning's Law and the resultant establishment of the assemblies collectivized as 'Grattan's Parliament'. This was the second of the legends that were, in varying degrees, to inspire the nineteenth and twentieth century Independence Movements.

What were its elements? They included as independent a legislature as any since 1494. This stimulated by its policy a general, and significant, increase in commercial activities (including, though this was generally exaggerated, manufactures). In addition, there was a general weakening of governmental anti-Catholi-

cism. All this makes the parliaments appear as great advances on previous regimes. In addition the first two benefits mentioned were not to be enjoyed between 1801 and 1921. Their existence explains 'Grattan's Parliament's' enforced suicide in the former year.

But that event would not have happened had the parliaments between 1782 and 1801 pertained genuinely to Henry Grattan or to those whom he represented. Though free of direct ties to Westminster, their manipulation through controlled elections and placemanship benefited Britain's representatives in the bureaucracy. The dice were still loaded against anyone who did not see his interests as being England's. This category included bourgeoisie, as such, Catholics, as such, artisans and, especially, peasants. Concessions were given to most of these. Wiser, perhaps, than its living heir, Parliament rejected Pitt's propositions for Anglo-Irish free trade in 1785; it protected cotton and gave bounties to other industries. Pressed by the threat of the French Revolution, it enfranchized (but did not allow parliamentary candidates from) the Catholics down to the forty shilling freeholders. But these surrenders did little to weaken the executive's power.

Nor did they help the majority of peasants, that is, of the population. The improvements of the second half of the century had, if anything, depressed their status further. The revived provisions trade gave landlords the opportunity to improve their lands by evictions and enclosures for cattle. The repeal of the Penal Law against Catholic landowners inflated land values further. Between 1760 and 1815 the value of the Irish rental quadrupled. It is about the earlier year that the Whiteboys begin to appear with their agrarian and pro-tillage demands. In Ulster, the religious divisions handicapped such movements and often turned them in upon themselves.

But the small merchants and workers were similarly (though less extremely) disgruntled and their dissatisfaction was argued by the events following 1789. Insurrectionary and corresponding societies arose under the inspiration of the French Revolution. The demand for universal suffrage was raised. The Government's feeble attempts at conciliation combined with more determined coercion merely encouraged disaffection. Finally, the various classes (now united in a national group) accepted French aid for their armed revolt in 1798.

The United Irishmen's Rising was defeated (like previous ones) by lack of co-ordinated plan, by treachery, and by the failure of foreign aid. But, above all, it was harmed by dissensions in the

movement between the wealthier bourgeoisie, who were prepared to threaten, but not to fight, and who were the official leaders, and the professional revolutionaries (like Wolfe Tone), the peasants and artisans who were less squeamish.

But it represented a major development in nationalist theory. For a century, since England's James II ('Seamas a'Chaca' or 'Crappy Jim' to Irishmen of the time) had been defeated leading an Irish National Party despite himself, Irish Nationalism had been associated with the Jacobite cause. The United Irishmen delivered it from this strait-jacket. From then on, the extreme demand of Irish patriots was to be a republic based on universal suffrage. This was itself a minimum demand: the left wing of the United Irishmen was to demand slightly more when Robert Emmett led them in 1802. Even so, when formulated, it implied revolutionary changes in society and as such was not again to be accepted fully by a national movement for nearly sixty years.

Another and associated significant development was that internationalism no longer meant the monarchism of the Stuarts' followers but association with the forces of international liberation, including those in Britain. Like the previous innovation, this was to be forgotten (though only for fifty years) and would, when revived, be remoulded in new and different ways as international horizons broadened.

But there was a third new tradition that appeared at the same time. From the Young Irelanders to the various groups of Irish communists, a secularist tradition has proceeded. At times, this has developed into anti-clericalism. But it has never been a theory of the majority of Nationalists and has often, indeed, been associated with their opponents. That this was, was due partly to the readiness of anti-Nationalist elements to talk in its terms, but above all, to the naturally more popular tradition that would be developed by Daniel O'Connell.

### III

#### *The Union Settlement*

The United Irish Rising strengthened English determination to end the independent Irish Parliament. In 1801, the Act of Union of Great Britain and Ireland was passed, by extending contempor-

ary parliamentary management techniques through 'Grattan's Parliament'. That had been an intrigue that could not have lasted long, but the manner of its disappearance, accompanied by a broken promise to the Catholics, was a bad omen for the Union.

The immediate task of the Unionists was to broaden their support. With the failure of Catholic emancipation, the groups in Ireland that supported the Union were all Protestant, and, indeed, mainly Anglican. They included most landlords, many Protestant business and professional men, many Protestant peasants (especially in the north-east) and, above all, the government bureaucracy.

This left the Catholics and Dissenters: the vast majority of the population. To win a sizable part of these, the supporters of the Union hoped for the success of two complementary policies. Firstly, the non-established churches (Catholic and Protestant) would be bought up. Secondly, Ireland's prosperity would be increased to benefit everybody.

The first scheme succeeded as far as the Presbyterian Dissenters were concerned. Their clergy accepted an increase in their traditional 'regium domum' in 1803. Henceforth, they were mostly lions under the British throne, encouraging anti-anti-Unionist feeling amongst their flocks. In 1834, the reactionary Anglican body, the Orange Order, was opened formally to all non-Catholics. The Union's cause was augmented, also, by many such of its opponents as Plunkett and Saurin, who accepted the fait accompli.

But though the bulk of these Presbyterian clergy was won for the Union, its Catholic equivalents were not to be bought. They might have been, but for their congregations. The laity was horrified at the proposal, even with emancipation thrown in. A young lawyer, Daniel O'Connell, led the opposition to the measure and prevailed upon the Catholic clergy to reject it, on the occasions that it was offered.

Failure to control the Catholic hierarchy was paralleled by failure to win great economic benefits. For the Government to end landlordism was, at this time, literally unthinkable. Now events magnified the landlord's deficiencies.

Between 1778 and 1831, the population rose by 159%. At the same time, especially after 1815, the enclosure of land for rearing England's provisions proceeded apace. This was most pronounced in the rich lands of the south and east, for geographic and agricultural reasons. Thus, by 1841, the poorest areas of Ireland (mainly west of the river Shannon) were the areas most densely populated.



At the same time, the Union caused Dublin's social decline vis-à-vis London. Many more landlords moved from Ireland and their incomes went with them. The absentee rent roll rose to £6-7,000,000 p.a. The loss of such a sum to national investment further reduced the reasons for staying in Ireland.

Investment was handicapped at a time when new industries were needed to maintain economic diversity. For want of coal, Britain's steam power could not be developed in the larger part of Ireland. Accordingly its embryo textile manufacturers could not compete with their rivals across the Irish sea. Few could see, anyway, what economic function Ireland could have except as supplier of livestock to the industrial island; even within the cattle trade, shipping 'on the hoof' was allowed to flourish at the expense of the slaughtering interest.

The rule had exceptions. Brewing, distilling, lace-making in Limerick, and, later, biscuit-making flourished for reasons peculiar to themselves, in the British market throughout the nineteenth century. Tobacco and some coal survived to the Famine. The expansion of ranching by land clearances stimulated the use of money, which led, by logical progression, to the growth of Irish banking.

In the north-east evolved what would be the most important exception of all. Linen had little British competition and could be expanded as an offshoot of the south-west Scotland industrial complex; its production flourished while the general Irish textile trade declined. It was soon rationalized by the factory system. In this, the owners saw that religious differences could be used to discipline their workers. Jobs were divided between Protestants and Catholic to cause maximum mistrust. Linen profits financed ship-building yards. Again, the aim was the British market: the greatest fleet in the world: again the bosses divided and ruled. The non-conformist radicalism of Tone's supporters allowed itself to be perverted into the paleo-Fascism of the Orange Order.

By the Famine, it was clear that the Union's supporters were limited essentially to the Protestants. They included most of the remaining landlords and of the larger trading concerns, an unduly large proportion of the professions, and most of the workers and peasants of the north-east.

All these groups other than the last supplied the dominating element of the Irish Civil Service, it would continue to be so controlled until 1922. This led to a dichotomy in its position. It was made by the Union, Ireland's effective controller, free from even the limits set on it by Grattan's Parliament. But it could not tran-

scend the limits set by its backers' interests. Thus, its most successful achievements were the founding of the Irish Constabulary and of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. Society nullified its other attempts at reform. The establishment of a non-denominational national primary school system and of the non-denominational Queen's University were cancelled out for many Catholics by the first institution's Protestant proselytizing. The education of the tenantry in scientific farming remained pointless because of the steady growth in the rackrenters' powers. When, later, the Irish Civil Service was reformed in line with that of Britain, it lacked the thorough-going rationalization that it should have had. It took the brilliant but shortlived Whig Undersecretary, Thomas Drummond to scotch the Orange Order. Such an equivocal record of achievement could not win Ireland's Catholic majority from the resurgent national movement.

#### IV

#### *King Dan and his subjects*

Unfortunately, Daniel O'Connell was the source of the mainstream of Irish opposition to the Union. In part, this was due to the readiness of many outspoken Nationalists to take jobs under the established regime: in part to the exiles and deaths of most United Irish leaders. But also it was due to his status as a leading lawyer and orator: to his position as personal link between rural Celt (he was a landowner in Kerry) and Anglo-Irishman (he was also a Dublin lawyer): later (after 1829) to his place as 'the Liberator'. To these advantages was added another: the fact that he had had nearly half a century of leadership in which to initiate a persisting Irish Nationalist tradition. Such an opportunity could not be avoided.

But O'Connell never tried to use it. He was Ireland's first charismatic national leader. His only clear aim seems to have been a separate Irish legislature with a place secure for him at its head. Beyond this, social, economic, or, indeed political radicalism were matters of tactics in his campaigns for Catholic Emancipation, for Tithe relief, for municipal reform, and for Repeal of the Union. His views varied according to whether he was wooing the Whigs, or the Radicals, or attacking the Tories, or anyone from whence

came a threat to his own position. But even tactical decisions were bound to influence the movement according to the social framework.

In the 1800s, this framework had yet to become an organic entity. Its parts included English landlords opposing Celtic tenants, a slowly growing Catholic bourgeoisie opposing an established Protestant equivalent, both taking their mores from the landlords; three denominational groups of clergy – Catholic, Anglican and Dissenter, artisans in Dublin and the Lagan Valley, and, over all, the Civil Service.

Of these groups, some were, or became shortly, Unionist per se: the bureaucracy, the Church of Ireland and the Protestant landlords and bourgeoisie. The Catholic peasantry, artisans, landlords and bourgeoisie were equally anti-Union especially after the breach of promise of Catholic Emancipation in 1801. Also Nationalist were the nonconformist peasants and artisans; less so were the non-Anglican clergy.

This situation provided grounds for various different possible causes of Nationalist action. The Penal Laws injured the Catholics: similar laws injured the Nonconformists. Landlordism weighed on bourgeois, artisan and peasant. To all these groups the Union became an additional burden. A Nationalist might raise his standard on Repeal alone, as O'Connell did at the beginning and end of his career. He might fight for better treatment for Catholics, as O'Connell did in the twenties and thirties. He might develop the principles of the United Irishmen to the circumstances of the Union, and ally to the most advanced interests in Ireland and Britain to achieve universal male suffrage supporting separate parliaments, and O'Connell did this briefly in the 1830s, until it became impossible to reconcile with the Whig alliance.

It is clear that O'Connell used a fourth method of procedure. He campaigned for limited, and at first arbitrarily chosen objectives. As a young arriviste between 1808 and 1815, he won pre-eminence by preventing the Catholic hierarchy following the Kirk into the Union establishment. From 1823 (and, more especially, 1824) to 1829, he worked with the parish priesthood, and despite the Hierarchy, to emancipate his co-religionists. In the next decade, he whittled down a radical programme to demands for Tithe relief and municipal reform, under pressure of Whig alliance and Feargus O'Connor's rivalry. At the last, in the 1840s, after a final, abortive, attempt to gain Repeal of the Union, he became dependent on the Catholic hierarchy's good-will and on shifting and half-hearted expedients that caricatured his previous tactical ingenuity.



What did he leave? An emerging people, say his admirers. But it cannot be said that O'Connellite liberation answered the needs of his supporters, or, indeed, that the O'Connellite nation represented all those groups that might have co-existed within it. Throughout his 'reign', and for some thirty years after it, agrarian agitation continued (except during the tithes war of the 1830s) separate from, yet contemporary with, the national struggle. Trade unions were distrusted by him. The advanced elements among the non-conformist Protestants were deserted and their followers allowed to surrender to the gentle leadership of their Unionist bosses. Only the Catholic gentry, bourgeoisie and Church can be described as real beneficiaries of O'Connellism. The first two were the gainers by liberation and municipal reform. The second was saved by him from the ties of the Union and was then enabled by his policies to establish the position of its aims at the centre of Irish Nationalism.

The policies that brought this result were ones that would naturally appear as reasonable to an opportunist. The break-up of the Celtic social order left the parish as the only nationally accepted unit of local organization: its priest, usually its most educated figure. With him organization was easy; without him, it was handicapped. It could have been done, as it had been done by the United Irishmen; but such a task appeared unnecessary to O'Connell.

His policies' weaknesses were magnified by circumstances, in some of which he had little influence. It was not his fault that the Presbyterian Nationalism's economic bases were sapped steadily during his career. It was not his fault that the spread of money and evictions in the eastern agricultural counties drove men into Dublin to swell the labour force there and weaken its political radicalism. He could not help the trade depression that further weakened the working-class morale and basis for political development. He was not to blame that Protestant abuses in the new secular primary education system gave excuse for Catholic denunciation of the secular principle. Nor was it his fault that the Union slump allied to growing opportunities for emigration (most notably, the Liverpool Steam Packet, from 1824) encouraged many of Ireland's potential radicals to use their talents abroad. (He was, however, certainly to blame for never making the best use of the subordinates that he had, and, often, alienating them from him and, in practice, from the main Irish National Movement.)

But in one matter, he did act consciously to magnify his own mistakes, although, until his last decade of life, he was at one with

most of his upper-class contemporaries in his error. By his very important example, he discouraged the use of the Irish language. In this the Dublin lawyer triumphed over the Kerryman. But his action was also a part of the clerical alliance; the Church preferred to preach and teach in English, as more helpful to its international apostolate, though its teaching orders, such as the Christian Brothers, were more nationally-inclined. Thus was stifled another basis for Irish Nationalism: a cultural one as was developing over most of the European sub-continent at O'Connell's death. This ideal would have been of its nature more susceptible to coherent social thought than the clerical ideal that actually dominated Irish Nationalism.

The possibility of preventing the entrenchment of this ideal existed always, though in decreasing strength. In the 1840s the 'Young Ireland' group developed similarly to contemporary movements in Europe. But these others did not have to contend with an O'Connell. Against him, by then, something was needed more than nineteenth-century bourgeois idealism. This was offered by only the Mitchellite minority of the Young Irelanders. Their successors of the 1850s, the Tenant Rights Leaguers, formed the last secularist Nationalist movement and it was dispersed by the opposition of the Catholic hierarchy and by its own isolation from the tenants whose spirits were broken by hunger. All that the Young Irelanders left behind were their writings. But these were to start a process of cumulation with powerful results.

From the 1850s, Secularist Nationalism in Ireland was a matter mainly of individuals, rather than of movements. The leading future Nationalist groupings tended either to renounce secularism or to avoid issues covered by it such as education. But clericalism coloured other aspects of policy. The internationalism of the United Irishmen became limited to the Anglo-American world, that covered both where British imperialism was subduing further peoples and where Irish emigrants had set up homes. Association with European liberation movements declined with such actions as the Irish Brigade's defence of the Papal states in the 1860s. Above all, clericalism was without any countervailing influence and could not, of itself, encourage the development of a coherent national social ideology. Irish Nationalism became socially opportunist, fighting on organizational, cultural, religious and political terms set by the upper classes, even where its chosen strategy threatened the social order. Only once, in the second half of the nineteenth century, was this process threatened, and then it reasserted itself more strongly than before in a new form.

But, by then, its original motivator had been long dead. After the event, there occurred a gesture symbolic of his life's total achievement. His heart was embalmed and sent to Rome. His carcase was returned to his native country.

## CHAPTER TWO

# AN ENGLISH COLONY 1847-1910

### I

#### *Physical force and Parliamentary Party*

The Great Famine is the outstanding watershed in modern Irish social history. This is not just because of the sheer size of its horror, though the lone number of 1,500,000, who died or emigrated during its period must compel attention. More certainly, it is because it provided a definite event whence one can say that the 'modern Irishman' holds his national stage. Before it, the Irish peasant tended to marry early, live by cultivating a tiny plot of land, talk Irish, surrender his coin to his landlord and know all foreign lands as foreign. After it, his numbers decreased and decreased; money (and thus credit) has a major influence on his life so that he no longer marries readily or is so willing to divide his holding; he talks some English and is, accordingly, more able to move from the countryside (causing an urban population explosion), or even from the country. Of course these changes (and such corollaries of them as the increase in grazing as against tillage) were appearing before the Famine. But that event did hasten them.

In politics the catastrophe retarded the progress of Nationalist social theory. The Union settlement was seen as leading inexorably to the disaster. So in the long run, at the end of the century, the Irish Social ideal was to take the form of an idealized version of the pre-1801 society plus tenant-ownership. In the immediate future it did not go beyond forcible overthrow of the Union with Britain. Neither panacea could replace O'Connell's legacy with one more democratic. Accordingly, landlord and bourgeois elements were found ready to take over most future national movements, however nihilistic their methods.

This is first seen clearly in the movement founded on March

17th, 1858. Its members called it simply the Organization, but it is generally known as the Fenian, or (from 1873) the Irish Republican, Brotherhood. Its founders were middle class intellectuals. They had associated with the left-wing Young Irelander, James Fintan Lalor, and had inherited his movement's secularism; they had learnt from the socialist secret societies of Europe, as well as from the peasant societies of Ireland. Yet their strategy was without any social content. The organization was made up as a purely military body disciplined accordingly, and with the single aim of driving out the British. This gained it the support of many artisans and emigrants, who had lost any reason to use such tactics for agrarian purposes, and who considered the link with Britain as having caused their misery. This working-class rank and file were simultaneously organizing an embryo trade union and labour movement affiliated to the First International in the late 1860s yet (like their British contemporaries) they never developed a connection between political and economic radicalism. Thus a small, but definite, number of new capitalists became Fenians. On the other hand, the vast bulk of the peasantry was alienated by the Brotherhood's disapproval of immediate agrarian agitation.

The Fenians created and maintained a power house of nationalism. But their secrecy and military organization made for a tendency to futility and fissibility as there appeared a chance of action. Its tradition of 'pure' Nationalism with its Famine basis encouraged later beliefs in the economics of Grattan's Parliament. Later still, membership of the I.R.B. was to weaken the will to democratic action when a form of independence was at last established.

Fenian weakness was shown when, after nine years, the hesitation of its leader, James Stephens, helped cripple a revolt. Many Fenians left a body that had shown productivity only of heroes. Others left because of the difficulties caused by clerical opposition to secret societies.

Yet the imprisonment and executions of Fenians encouraged sympathy for them. In 1869, a leading prisoner, Jeremiah O'Donovan 'Rossa' was elected M.P. for county Tipperary.

Both the administration and many landlords and capitalists were dismayed. The former disestablished the Church of Ireland, passed a Land Act that, for the first time, benefited the tenants and released the Fenian prisoners. Some of the latter tried to steal the Fenians' thunder by forming (with ex-Tenant Right M.P.s and disgruntled members of the British parties) an Irish Home Rule League to demand a measure of legislative freedom ('Home



Rule'). After promising also land reform and full denominational education (the latter in the O'Connell tradition), the League won 59 seats in the general election of 1874.

Most of the new M.P.s were landlords, but there was a minority of capitalists and professional men, many of whom had been Fenians. Some of these radicals, led by the Ulster businessman, Joseph Biggar, broke early with the constitutionalism of the party majority, and began obstructing the parliamentary process. They were joined by a young M.P. of the landlord class, Charles Stewart Parnell, who became their leading figure. But they lacked an organization to gain control of their party, and, even more, to supersede the I.R.B. They gained an opportunity by two unexpected events.

The first was the increase in peasant misery caused by the world agricultural slump of the 1870s. A rise in rent arrears caused more evictions and, hence more agrarian agitation. This appeared even among Ulster Protestant tenants: their custom was jeopardized by increased rents.

Yet there might have been no political reaction had it not been for an ex-Fenian, Michael Davitt. He had been born of an Irish evictee who had emigrated to Lancashire, and reared his son among the New Model Trade Unionists. From these young Davitt had learnt their pragmatic radicalism, and he now applied it to Ireland. Like most of the Irish Nationalist Left, he had little ideological subtlety. But he possessed the idea, conceived briefly by O'Connell as a tactic, of a non-denominational mass movement of Celtic peasants and British artisans to achieve the rights cheated from them by the British gentry. Such a policy now had some basis in Britain in the trade unions and their M.P.s. In Ireland, there were only tiny local trade councils, the peasants, the Fenians and the Parnellites. Davitt determined to organize these groups with the peasants as the vanguard and to demand the nationalization of the land.

Initially, he was successful. In 1879, Parnell accepted leadership of an Irish Land League. This body organized candidatures at the 1880 general election so that the landlord majority of Home Rulers was turned into an urban bourgeois majority which chose Parnell as its leader. Peasants flocked to support this 'New Departure'. It received money from emigrants in America. The I.R.B. Supreme Council was isolated in its opposition to the movement. A new tactic of isolation was tried successfully against a certain Captain Boycott. The parish clergy had to support their parishioners, the Hierarchy was divided. Ulster Protestantism was similarly split. The League survived government coercion.

Davitt had weakened clerical influence over the National Movement, but he had done so with the aid of the rising bourgeoisie. This had no real quarrel with the clerical tradition and mistrusted his policy of land nationalization. The urban workers were not yet strong enough to take its place.

Thus, in 1881, Gladstone's Second Irish Land Act split the Land League. Parnell, his party and their capitalist allies supported it; so did the clergy. The peasants, backed by the Irish-Americans, held out for their full demands. In the succeeding struggle, the Land League was smashed. The urban workers turned from active politics.

It was replaced by a National League under Parnell's direct supervision. After the 1885 Reform Act had established a measure of household suffrage, he was aided by the parish clergy. The Parliamentary Nationalists became dedicated only to 'Home Rule', by the methods, to 1886 of playing off Liberals and Conservatives, and after 1886 of alliance with the Liberals alone. The British working classes were ignored (except by Davitt) and the British radicals insulted. The Protestant tenantry lost its fervour for an increasingly clerical and conservative movement. When an abortive Home Rule Bill was introduced in 1886, the Orange Lodges were able to observe their working class followers participate in sectarian riots.

The National League's social vagueness was essential to Parnell's ascendancy therein. His known policies tended to diverge from those of his leading followers. He disliked Davitt's support for trade unions, and worried Irish, as well as British, capitalists by advocating Irish tariffs. His support for land reform after 1881 varied according to political considerations. By 1890, his main real claim to leadership was that he was acceptable to the Liberal supporters of Home Rule. This was shown in that year by the withdrawal of allegiance to him in his party, when that support had been alienated by his behaviour with Mrs O'Shea.

But the anti-Parnellites based their case on an appeal to Catholic morality. This was produced by the power structure within the National League and it was successful in winning opposition to Parnell from the Catholic middle classes. An unholy alliance with Davitt enabled it similarly to win the peasantry.

On the other hand, the Northern Protestants were, if possible, alienated still further from Nationalism. Moreover, his opponents' negative appeals gave Parnell increased strength from the propertyless class in town and country. In Dublin, especially, he received backing that lasted after his death in 1891. This was the first sign

of working-class adherence to Parnellite economic policies that would be spread by Sinn Fein in the next decade.

But, as yet, a more generalized republicanism was the prime beneficiary from Parnell's break with his party. From that event, the I.R.B. showed revived activity. It was encouraged by the defeat in 1893 of a new, mild, Home Rule Bill, by the Unionist front ministry elected to power in 1895 and, above all, by the Parliamentary Nationalists' continuing division into a large and a small group under (after Parnell) identical leaders. Other expressions of urban nationalist discontent showed themselves. Many patriotic young men set up literary societies in which were discussed politics that went beyond Home Rule. In 1896, James Connolly set up an Irish Socialist Republican Party. In 1898 republican elements started a campaign to commemorate the United Irishmen. At the same time, famine sustained agrarian agitation in the west.

Now the anti-Parnellite leader, William O'Brien, initiated a campaign to revive the Land League alliance of party, peasantry and emigrants on the most progressive terms that the Catholic middle classes could accept. He enlisted the aid of Davitt in setting up a United Ireland League to back a reunited Irish Party. The League's social programme included the end of rural leaseholds, the division of the western grazing estates, and more labourers' smallholdings for the peasantry: for the bourgeoisie, more powers for the new local authorities, Irish industrial development, restoration of the excess Irish taxes revealed by a commission in 1896, and (a sop also to the artisan) an end of urban ground rents and terminable leases: for the clergy, a separate Irish Catholic University and for the new Gaelic League the preservation of the 'Gaelic' language. In 1900, the Parliamentary Party was reunited on this policy under the Parnellite, John Redmond. On it, many new and young M.P.s were elected in the general election of the same year. Simultaneously a United Irish League of America was formed to replace the Fenian-orientated Clann na Gael and increase emigrant supplies for Parliamentary Nationalism.

But there were still divisions. The extreme clerical anti-Parnellite, T.M. Healy, was soon expelled from the Party for campaigning openly against the League. Then continued a dual struggle: for power, between Party and League: on policy, between O'Brien (the League's secretary) and the rest. O'Brien found that a progressive element among the landlords would co-operate with him to get good terms for themselves. Through the resulting talks,



George Wyndham's Land Act of 1903 established preconditions for complete tenant land purchase. Now O'Brien sought to achieve Home Rule by similar methods. This went against the feeling of the U.I.L. and he had to resign his secretaryship. Party control was then established over the League.

But that body was not simply a revival of the 1880's organization. Since 1881, the smaller Irish capitalists had grown in influence and had been given power in the local councils set up by the 1898 Local Government Act. These people were overwhelmingly Catholic and were perhaps the most bitterly hostile of all classes to the Unionist ascendancy and opposed to politicians (like O'Brien) that tried to compromise with it. They dominated the United Ireland League.

Such people could not be long controlled by the politicians. One of these, Joseph Devlin, succeeded O'Brien as secretary of the U.I.L. This young Ulster Catholic became, in 1904, first national President of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, a Catholic charitable body, which he used, to revive the League's old functions as Irish petty capitalism's representative organization. Between 1905 and 1915, the order's membership multiplied by more than twenty.

Increased class (and religious) exclusiveness in the Home Rule rank and file was unsympathetic both to established Unionists and to other Nationalist groups. The Irish Party's existence came to depend entirely on achieving its political aims.

This looked more hopeful with the return to power in 1905 of the British Liberal Party. But the new government offered only a form of 'devolution' based on a Council of Local Bodies and unacceptable to the Parliamentarians' lay and clerical supporters. The Party met renewed rivalry: Sinn Fein from 1905: a more quickly reviving I.R.B. from 1907: a Socialist Party of Ireland from 1909: and O'Brien and Healy's All for Ireland League, the same year. Then in 1910, a new general election left the Liberals dependent upon the U.I.L. Now it had a last chance to win Irish self-government as it saw it, by its own methods.

*The fall and rise of the Irish peasant*

Naturally, it was the Irish peasant who was most hurt by the Great Famine and who was the immediate victim of its consequences.

These were mainly trends that had been developing before 1845 under the twin pressures of over-population and the spread of money in the rural areas. What the Famine (and the capitalist measures taken to relieve it) did was to magnify their speed with catastrophic results.

Most obvious was the rural population decline which was at once absolute and relative to the town population's stability. The expansion of transport and of a money-based economy and, above all, the fact of over-population were all factors stimulating this, and were encouraged or emphasized by the Hunger. Transport facilities enabled many to leave the country. In many areas wealthy peasants let their starving neighbours have goods on credit and used the resulting hold over the latter to become monopoly storekeepers or gombeen (gaimbin, literally 'interest') men, who provided an alternative demand on the peasants' purses, but one that kept money circulating in the country. The fact of congestion was emphasized first by the inadequacy of the potato plot. In 1847 it was magnified by the Irish Poor Law which made relief payable by landlords in proportion to the numbers of their tenants and to those claimants exclusively who held land of less than a quarter of an acre. This led to an increase in the size of holdings: in 1841 one fifth of them had been over 15 acres: in 1851 half of them were. The surviving peasant found that money was essential for adequate survival; he became careful about marrying early and, indeed, about marrying at all. On the other hand he gradually became less resigned to his lot. Some peasants failed either to die or to emigrate: they became itinerants without land or fixed address, who lived on precarious incomes supplied by smithing, soldering and very much later, as plastics harmed these means of life, begging.

On top of this, the landlords did not allow the Famine to make them weaken their demands. Various benevolent ones ruined themselves by trying to help their tenants and were enabled by the Entailed Estates Act of 1849, to sell their lands to less amiable people. The Poor Law encouraged rent increases. Above all, no

landlord, however well-meaning, could deal adequately with the national problem of congestion. Thus, between 1845 and 1855, the national rent roll increased from £15,000,000 to £18,000,000. Simultaneously, the move away from tillage was stimulated by the wages that scarcity made payable to the farm labourers remaining in Ireland. Finally, in 1860, the Landlord and Tenant Law Amendment Act (Deasy's Act) gave the landlord full powers to recover land without notice of compensation for improvement.

By now, the national pattern of land-holding was established for the next century, though the pattern of products per type of farm was to fluctuate. The smallest (under 30 acres) farms which had the most varied product were west of the River Shannon where the land was worst. In the east were the grazing estates supplying store cattle to the British market. These tended to be the largest farms (100 acres and more: often co-equal with the landlords themselves) and the biggest employers of labour, though they did not employ many for their size. In the south were the medium-sized dairy farms, also employers of labour: not large absolutely, but relatively. This is roughly the basis on which one will talk of 'small', 'large' and 'medium' farmers for convenience.

Although Fenianism was not a rural movement, its appearance stimulated the British Government to provide mild alleviation for the farmer's lot. In 1869, the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland gave its tenants (less than 7,000 out of a national total of 593,000) the ownership of their holdings on easy terms. The first Irish Land Act (1870) gave the tenant compensation for his improvements and for most evictions. But compensation was not offered in cases of eviction for arrears of rent and the Act gave merely an ineffectual warning against exorbitant demands. Thus, after 1877, when a series of bad potato crops were joined to a world agricultural depression, the decline of the tenant's income was not made up by any reduction of the landlord's financial claims. Uncompensated evictions increased, ('neo-Whiteboy') 'Ribbon' agitation revived.

But the peasantry had now outgrown Ribbon tactics alone. The practical end of subsistence farming left the tenant readier to maintain a long-term struggle. With the nation-wide Land League, assassination was kept in the background as a threat to back the boycott of the landlord or his (positive or negative) ally. It intended to achieve land nationalization. Its results turned out rather differently.

The 1881 Land Act established a form of double ownership between landlord and tenant, the latter having the right to enhanced

value and sale of improved lands. In addition, Land Courts fixed rents for fifteen years and the Church Temporalities Commission that had enabled glébe tenants to buy their lands became a land commission for all tenants. Not only was nationalization shelved, but the Act's forbidding of land subdivision drew a definite line between the farmworkers of small (and very small) property and the farmworkers with none.

As yet, this did not matter. The Act was imposed over the dead body of the Land League. What was more, tenant radicalism remained necessary. As late as 1896, 45% of Ireland's agricultural produce went as rent or as tax (the British figure was 10%). In addition, the real price of agricultural goods continued to decline throughout the 1880s. During the same decade, the landlords continued to demand arrears of rent (although such demands were mitigated by an Act of 1883) and the unbalanced distribution of Irish rural population remained uncorrected.

But the resultant revivals of the Land League were limited in scope. Davitt associated himself with the labourers and brought them briefly into the labour movement. In their name, he reiterated the demand for land nationalization. But the farmers found other leaders. Their Plan of Campaign against rent arrears was headed by bourgeois figures, O'Brien and John Dillon, neither of whom was enthusiastic for extreme aims. Eventually, when the agitation of 1898 seemed to threaten bourgeois domination of Nationalist politics, the U.I.L. took up Davitt's own tactical surrender of the principle of nationalization in favour of piecemeal reform.

At the same time, the Unionists' wish to kill Home Rule led them to attempt to create the conditions for a conservative peasantry. In 1891, Balfour's Land Act set up a Congested Districts Board to relieve the problems of the areas under its authority. In 1899, a special Irish Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction was set up to improve production in the Irish economy. Another policy was the transformation of the tenantry into a class of peasant proprietors. The climax of this policy was Wyndham's Land Act of 1903. In the six years after it, 270,000 of the 500,000 odd remaining tenants bought their holdings.

The land purchase policy and its associate, the policy of negotiating with the landlords, was most successful in the dairy province of Munster, where William O'Brien broke with his party to support it. That went with a new development that affected this area especially.

Here the mechanical cream separator had been introduced in the

1880s as a replacement of the old hand method. The expense of this gave the local gombeenman a new opportunity to strengthen his position vis-à-vis the farmer. To offset him, co-operative creamery societies began to appear. They soon found a backer in the Unionist, Horace Plunkett, and, unlike similar plans of his, they prospered. In April, 1894, a national body, the Irish Agricultural Organization Society, was founded. In 1898, it was backed by the Irish Agricultural Wholesale Society which aimed to beat the gombeenmen in the agricultural supplies trade. In 1899, Plunkett became the first secretary of the new Department of Agriculture and initiated a state subsidy for the I.A.O.S. Co-operative Credit Unions were begun. By 1900 there were 477 co-operative societies in existence.

In its development, the co-operative movement appears as a natural ally of the Unionist Party of which Plunkett was a member for several years into the twentieth century. To consider it thus would be to ignore the ideals of its mentors. They were, in several ways, divergent from the path of the movement. Plunkett himself tended to take the utilitarian view expressed in his slogan 'better business: better farming: better living'. However, George Russell (Æ) who edited the movement's journal, *The Irish Homestead* envisaged a new society of rural communes; a vision that would for a time align him personally with the revolutionary socialist, James Connolly. Both Russell and Plunkett considered that the rural labourer should be involved in co-operation. Both mistrusted the Irish petty capitalist (with good reason) and his Parliamentary Party (from which it was only a short step to distrusting all politicians). Both were disposed benevolently to the Gaelic and industrial revivals and to feminine participation in society, and for the latter end helped found the United Irishwomen (now the Irish Countrywomen's Association) in 1910.

More was needed to defeat the handicaps of the movement. The small capitalists were naturally hostile and they influenced the U.I.L. and the A.O.H. The bureaucracy was, for once, in agreement with these groups having no wish for co-operative rural communes. Further, in 1904, Plunkett offended the Catholic Church by somewhat tactless and superficial references in his book, *Ireland in the New Century*. With these against it, the I.A.O.S. could only flourish among those who could fight and had a need to do so. Except where there arose an organizer of the calibre of Paddy ('the Cope') Gallagher of Co. Donegal, this excluded the small farmer and the rural labourer and left the emphasis on the movement's dairy farming initiators. These needed co-operation less as



their area's prosperity had encouraged correction among its gombeenmen. Also they were reluctant to ally with the similarly beleaguered urban workers or with their own labourers. Thus, its only allies were the O'Brienite M.P.s and the Southern Unionist *Irish Times* when, in 1907, its enemies attacked.

First the Liberal Government was prevailed upon after nearly two years to sack Plunkett as a Unionist anomaly. His Liberal successor, T.W. Russell, was persuaded to stop the I.A.O.S. grant. This all but smashed the movement; many of its subsidiary projects, like the co-operative credit banks, went under. Plunkett had to subsidize it for the next six years, partly out of his own pocket and partly out of American appeals, until the grant was restored in 1913.

It was only in the latter year that George Russell discovered the Urban Labour Movement.

### III

#### *The Emergence of Irish Labour*

Outside the north-east, the modern Irish urban labour force developed from before the Great Famine. It was a child of the clearances that were fostered by the expansion of money and of grazing. It soon outgrew and destroyed the radical artisan class of the 1790s, which O'Connell, the slump and the boat were already debilitating.

The new class developed its consciousness in the 1850s at the same time as the British were developing their a-political 'New Model Unionism'. Thus the Irish artisan was able to express himself politically in the purest Republicanism of the Fenians, while developing economically in timid trade bodies. Fusion of the latter began in 1863 when the Dublin United Trades Association was formed 'not... to interfere with the legitimate process of trade' and continued elsewhere. In 1868, the Dublin body joined the new British Trade Union Congress. Despite Belfast's greater advance as a manufacturing centre, it was not to develop its Trade Union Council until 1881. In common with the British example, branches of the First International were set up in the 1860s in Dublin, Belfast and Cork; they collapsed in 1871, with their matrix body and without leaving much imprint.

By the end of the 1880s, most Irish towns had their Trade Union Councils. The British T.U.C. found it difficult to give Irish Trade Union problems the time that their participants claimed for them. A movement developed to set up an Irish T.U.C. and, despite suspicious in Belfast, such a body held its first meeting in Dublin in 1894.

The new body had four main problems. Three were common to both Ireland and Britain. They were what to do about unorganized unskilled labour (its position was more desperate in Ireland than in Britain): whether to continue to support the main 'left-wing' party (in Ireland, the Irish Parliamentary Party) or movement (the Fenians and their front bodies) or to create a specifically working class one: whether to go beyond reformism. The fourth problem concerned the individual trade unions in the I.T.U.C.: whether to continue to allow affiliation to it of trade unions with London headquarters. The first three problems were to be solved, more or less, during the I.T.U.C.s first twenty years: the last was to be shelved but would return, much later, to plague.

The related question of parliamentary action and of ideology had begun when a Liberal-Labour candidate, Alexander Bowman, was defeated in standing for North Belfast in 1885. In 1890, Parnell had sufficient working-class support to base a new specifically Labour movement on it had he wished. His death and the succession to him of the ultra-conservative, Redmond, destroyed any possibility of this; even so, Dublin remained a Parnellite stronghold in 1892. On the other hand, in the same year, Davitt and two other workingmen were elected as Anti-Parnellite M.P.s, though Davitt was subsequently unseated. A few similar Trade Council Nationalists were later elected; they tended to follow the party line rather more than their Lib-Lab equivalents. This caused disaffection, especially in Belfast, where a group of Municipal Socialists, soon to find a leader in young William Walker, were urging on alliance of the I.T.U.C. with the British Independent Labour Party. At the same time, branches of the I.L.P. and of the Fabian Society were set up in various towns to survive only in Dublin and in the north-east.

In 1896, young James Connolly formed an Irish Socialist Republican Party to achieve a 'Workers' Republic' of Ireland by constitutional means.

Compared with Fenianism and Parnellism, the I.S.R.P. represented a tremendous advance in social theory. Its programme included the nationalization of the banks, popular control of the national schools, and free education to the higher university

grades. Less radical to us, seventy years after, are its demands for pensions for the aged, infirm, widows and orphans, free maintenance for children, nationalization of the means of transport and the necessities of life, control of agricultural machinery supplies, graduated income tax, universal suffrage and the forty-eight hour week. It also sent delegates to the Second International, which had been ignored by Irish Labour since its foundation.

But all this made it, perhaps, too advanced for its times. The unskilled workers weren't organized enough for it; after nearly a century of bourgeois colonial stagnation the skilled were not intellectually ready for it. A further handicap was its acceptance of parliamentary tactics which placed it at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the sitting parliamentarians. These facts militated against the I.S.R.P. as the United Ireland League developed after 1898. Quarrels split the Party and, in 1903, its organizer and chief theorist, Connolly, left for the U.S.A.

As yet, Connolly had not developed ideologically to the point he had reached at his later return to Ireland. Nonetheless, his basic position was established. It was a development from that of Davitt. He was a part of the new European Marxist generation of the Second International. Davitt had inherited and combined the pragmatism of the Fenians and of the British 'New Model Unions' and Liberal-Labour M.P.s.

Davitt's idea was the cross-channel alliance of the propertyless to achieve, amongst other things, an independent Ireland with the state as sole landowner, and which was free from sectarian hegemonies and the strife arising therefrom. To this end, he worked both with the British Labour and with the Irish Parliamentary Party, readily compromising his immediate aims until in his last months, in 1906, the latter's sectarianism alienated him.

Connolly agreed with Davitt on land nationalization and on non-sectarianism; he broadened the scope of the latter's internationalism. But his outlook enabled him to go further than his precursor. Despite his personal Catholicism, his Socialism justified the class war by the Marxists concepts of dialectical materialism and the Labour Theory of Value. This hardened his attitude against both the Catholic capitalist demand for Home Rule and against the Belfast Socialist proposals for co-operation within the I.L.P. Both were, at best, palliatives diverting attention from the aim of the Irish Socialist Republic for which his party stood.

Yet he was essentially an activist, and a working-man with a large and growing family. Thus he had no time to take his analysis far enough. He never conducted any deep investigation into the



power structure of Irish society. His later work, *Labour in Irish History*, does not fill the gap. This failure caused him to overestimate socialism's chance of immediate success in Ireland. For him, the Dublin artisans were the heirs (and not, as they were ideologically, the contemporaries) of the United Irishman Jemmy Hope. For him the agricultural tenants, whom he didn't know well, would be aided by their folk memories of Celtic Ireland and Ralahine as well as by necessity to co-operate rationally against growing foreign competition. When the anticipated results showed no sign of occurring, Connolly went to America. This was the biggest mistake of his life.

In the first place, America introduced him to Industrial Unionism and to the Syndicalism associated with it there. For him, the One Big Union of the unskilled was the answer to the failure of the I.S.R.P. But he learnt also, less accurately, to consider it as the workers' chief force in their political struggle and to degrade thereby the role of the Party. At the same time he never formally clarified his recognition of the role of the national struggle as a weapon within organized Labour's fight for Socialism, though, personally, he was able to use it as such. His execution in 1916 left Irish Labour in the hands of less flexible men, with disastrous results.

Another result of Connolly's departure was that it left the I.S.R.P. less able to oppose adequately a new rival.

While the Parliamentary Party was split, many of the radical element among the younger artisans had joined the I.R.B. or one of the new Nationalist literary societies that often acted, in practice, as its front organizations. In 1900, twenty such societies in Dublin had amalgamated to form a new politico-literary group called Cumann na nGeadhael ('The Family of the Gaels' or Irish). This body's first president was the elderly I.R.B. leader, John O'Leary. Its moving spirits were two young working-class Fenians, William Rooney (who died, however, in 1901) and Arthur Griffith who became the body's ideologist.

In 1904, Griffith produced his *Resurrection of Hungary* which described how the Hungarians had won their separation from Austria in 1867. First, he pointed out that they had established nationally-inspired cultural and economic institutions. Then, in the 1860s, their representatives refused to participate in the Austro-Hungarian joint diet and set up a separate parliament which claimed for itself the allegiance of all Hungarians and recognized the authority of the Emperor of Austria only insofar as he was King of Hungary. The success of these tactics was used by Grif-

fith to point out a moral for Ireland. Its M.P.s should withdraw from Westminster on the grounds that the last Irish parliament, being merely a collection of elected representatives, could not by itself end its existence. A separate Irish parliament should therefore be set up and should initiate all executive bodies of an independent state, especially a consular service. All taxes should be paid to this government and all local authorities would owe its allegiance. The King of England should be recognized only insofar as he was King of Ireland.

To back this 'Hungarian' policy, a National Council (officially separate from Cumann na nGaedhael) was set up. It aimed to co-ordinate and encourage Nationalist action in every sphere. Similar movements were developing elsewhere. In Cork city, young Terence MacSwiney and his friends had started a Cork Celtic Literary Society. In Ulster, two other young Fenians, Bulmer Hobson and Sean MacDermott (Mac Diarmada) founded the Dungannon Clubs.

All such bodies appealed to the men of no property for political reasons; economics were ignored as in nearly every such movement since the Fenians.

Then, in November 1905, Cumann na nGaedhael and the National Council merged with the Dungannon Clubs to form a political party, Sinn Féin. At the inaugural meeting, Griffith proclaimed for the new party an economic programme that was to haunt Irish Republicans for the next fifty years.

This urged the development of the Irish economy by a vast programme of reform, immediately by individuals and localities: eventually by the separatist government. Some kind of reform of transport, a national survey of resources and a national stock exchange were amongst his proposals. What caught the imagination, however, were the bulk of them. They included tariffs, a subsidized mercantile marine, Irish control of the banking system, the mobilization (or recall) of all possible Irish and American capital and, in agriculture, more tillage, re-forestation and revival of Irish fisheries. The workers were offered a national system of insurance, reform of the Poor Law and, with the tariffs, control of retail prices.

There were several proposals here to which a Socialist could take exception. But, by and large, this was the minimum economic programme of the non-Parliamentary Nationalists. It represented their lowest common economic denominator. It appealed to an artisan class whose members could still aspire to petty bourgeois status. It reflected everyone's idea of independent Ireland; Grattan's

Parliament had imposed tariffs successfully, the Union had ended them and had brought the Hunger, decline of tillage and the financier's abuse of their powers. Thus Republicanism had an economic theory that could cover most of those subscribing to its political aim. For a few years Sinn Fein was the open politico-economic expression of the I.R.B. On its left wing was the Socialist and ex-Conollyite, P.T. Daly. The right included Griffith himself who believed that Ireland could become an independent capitalist state such as the teachings of his inspirer, Friedrich List, had helped make Germany.

The new party took a leading part in stimulating the economy.

It participated in such bodies as the Dublin Industrial Development Association, tried to start a bank and even endeavoured to print its own postal stamps.

In politics, it gained some seats on Dublin Corporation. Moreover, although Griffith's hope for large bourgeois support never materialized, impatience with the new Liberal government's avoidance of Home Rule made a number of M.P.s sympathize with it. The M.P. for Kilkenny resigned his seat to join it. The M.P. for North Leitrim joined it, resigned his seat, fought the resulting bye-election as its candidate and was roundly defeated.

The rise in the prospects of Home Rule after the general election of January 1910 reduced Sinn Fein's chances of greater capitalist support. What was more, its economic schemes and its attempt to start a daily newspaper had brought it into debt. The I.R.B. was reviving as a body in its own right and grew cool over the royalism implicit in the Hungarian Policy. Finally many who were not Socialists (including such future notabilities as MacDiarmada, Eamonn Ceannt and W.T. Cosgrave) disliked Griffith's increasing hostility to a new trend in working class organization.

Until 1907, the unskilled urban worker was not to be reckoned with in Irish politics. He was no more than one of the worse paid sector of the worst paid community in the U.K. Throughout the 1900s, Dublin had the highest death-rate in the British Isles. In 1909, its unemployment figure was estimated at 20%. The wage of the Irish unskilled building worker was up to one third less than that of his British counterpart.

Matters began to change for the better when young James Larkin, of the National Union of Dock Labourers arrived in 1907 to organize the Belfast dockers. The employers backed sectarian thuggery to split his support. Nonetheless he managed to oppose a lock-out successfully by a series of sympathetic strikes. This was

Larkinism.

The next year he broke with the N.U.D.L. over its settlement of the dispute. In 1909, he proclaimed a new Irish Transport and General Workers Union that would be open to all unskilled workers, especially in the Irish cities. In 1910 this Union was admitted to the I.T.U.C. despite some opposition from the old-guard craft unionists.

Already, at Larkin's request, Connolly was returning to Ireland to become the I.T.G.W.U.'s Belfast organizer. The I.S.R.P. had merged with various other Socialist splinter groups to form a Socialist Party of Ireland which was attracting back Daly and the Sinn Fein left. The cry was revived for a definite republican T.U.C. Party. The demand was now backed by 3,000 organized workers.

But there was one weakness in their position. Unlike in most European countries, (as in Germany and, indeed, Russia) the bulk of the organized unskilled had not been industrialized (outside the special conditions of the north-east). Thus they were less prepared for class struggle in the political sphere: more prepared for the metaphysical struggles of Syndicalism-cum-Nationalism. In this way, they were to be doubly exploited by Irish capitalism.

#### IV

#### *The bourgeois revolution*

In June 1844, just over a year before the potato blight, Robert Kane produced a work entitled *The Industrial Resources of Ireland*. In it he outlined a scheme for industrial expansion, of which many suggestions were not to be carried out until the establishment of Saorstát Éireann, and a few have yet to appear.

That Kane could write on that would prove to be a long-term basis was less because of his prophetic powers than his over-optimistic hopes. These were based especially upon the post-1831 system of national primary education. They ignored the fact of the structure of the economic hierarchy.

The normal, vague economic division between large and small capitalists was deepened as a result of the Union. It became reflected generally in the political divisions of the country.

At the top of Irish capitalism was a number of firms, headed



mainly by Protestants. Outside the north-east, they included brewing and distilling firms and most of the banks all of which had adapted themselves to Union conditions. They feared accordingly any O'Connellite reversion to the economics of 'Grattan's Parliament'. In the Unionist cause this group was a junior partner to the landlords from whom, and from England, it took its mores. It did not regard itself as anti-Irish and its members spent an appreciable amount of their money in the country. As capitalists, however, they looked to England or to the centres of British investment for their profitable opportunities.

Below, and opposing these were the mainly Catholic National capitalists. These were found mainly in the service and distributive (especially drink) trades, also in such small industries as lace-making and in the new National Bank. Their numbers were being augmented by the expansion of the rural monetary economy that was to reach its climax with the Famine. Much of the respectable demand for the repeal of the Union was based on this class and its belief that a return to pre-Union tariff policies would enable them to invest profitably to the scale of the Protestants. Their general social outlook was much the same as that of the latter: they too took their political leadership from landowners or from professional men in the landed tradition.

Sixty years later, the superficial picture of the division among Irish capitalists showed little change. There was now a wide variety of Catholic-run industries amongst others, in leather, textile, paper and printing, fats, milling and glass. There was one large-scale Catholic firm (Gallaghers, the tobacco company) which produced for export. A second bank (The Hibernian) and the Phoenix Insurance Company showed an increased Catholic presence within Irish finance capital. Most notable was the rise of large-scale Catholic non-manufacturing entrepreneurs such as W.M. Murphy in Dublin and the Dowdalls in Cork. But Protestant capital still held its pre-eminent position.

But between the two groups of capitalists, the lines of struggle were different. The Entailed Estates Act of 1849 enabled the less prosperous Protestant landlord to sell out. Thus it reduced the barriers to Catholic landlordism to which many who had aspirations were now able to make good. This left the dominant element amongst the bourgeoisie as the shopkeeper-gombeen class. Members of this were often less than a generation removed from the peasantry, and hated the landlords economically both as extortionists and as rivals in that art. They had no rural landowning ambitions; they looked to the towns, especially Dublin. Thus, after

1850 in successive, at first unsuccessful, Tenant Leagues they allied with the peasants against the landlords. In 1880, they won in this way, leadership of the Parliamentary Nationalist Movement.

From Gladstone's Second Land Act, the petty capitalists consolidated their political authority. At first, they did this cautiously in alliance with the priests, with their greater popular authority. Then successive Land Acts weakened the landlords still further. Their own powers grew, both politically (as anti-landlord leaders) and economically (fewer rents meant better business). On Dublin Corporation, O'Connell had ensured bourgeois Nationalist dominance by winning an Irish Municipal Reform Act. Now the Nationalists ended the mutual agreement that gave the Unionists a Lord Mayor every other year. From 1898, the local power of the bourgeoisie was expressed politically in the countryside, through the rural councils now established. Finally, the spread of the A.O.H. outside Ulster gave them the highest expression of their power and became the vehicle that looked like entrenching the Catholic gombeen men at head of a home ruling Ireland.

The preamble to the Rules of the Ancient Order of Hibernians harks back to the Irish long struggle for (Catholic 'Faith and fatherland'. It urges 'the securing of religious equality and the self-government of Ireland' as against 'the growing strength of Materialist views and selfish interests' such as 'the evil influences of secret, Communistic, Socialistic and of other societies of the age whose tendencies are to social chaos, blasphemous atheism and the overthrow of constituted authority'. Such slogans were ideal to an organization that combined great formal benevolence with being the political expression of Irish Catholic capitalism. Thus it was for 'Home Rule' as it had developed in successive Bills and against anything short of it. It opposed the Anglo-Irish Trading firms as being too-powerful competitors. It disliked the Union Civil Service (apart from its natural political bias, it was uneconomic and interventionist). It was doubtful about trade unionism (especially after Larkin's appearance). Despite its religion, it was less 'priest-ridden' than Parnell's National League; not only did its members prefer to follow Rome ruling only in theology, but many priests carried out entrepreneurial functions in their areas and were ready to collaborate with the Civil Service, as in the Congested Districts Board. Naturally parties outside the U.I.L. were regarded with hostility. But the body which caused most hatred among Hibernians, after landlords and Unionists, was the I.A.O.S.; its success imperilled gombeen-power at its base.



The narrow views of a body that had claims to be the Irish Parliamentary Party's grey eminence did not encourage support for Home Rule amongst those who didn't happen to be small Catholic entrepreneurs. For Unionist organizers of the north-east, such a body was a gift. What was more, hostility arose amongst the traditional Home Ruler supporters.

Such a large Catholic entrepreneur as William Martin Murphy found it more profitable to do business with his Protestant equals than to attack them with Hibernian slogans. Many rural co-operators of the south-west were equally doubtful about the Order. These groups found a leader in the dissident Parliamentarian, William O'Brien. They formed in 1909 a rival Home Rule Party, the All for Ireland League.

This was a ramshackle affair. It included, Murphy's friend, T.M. Healy, the future Labour Party member, D.D. Sheehan, and Morton Frewen, for a short spell the only Irish tariff reformer M.P. Its policy was an appeal to men of good will of all religions to achieve Home Rule on the United Ireland League's original programme. This was no more than what the U.I.L. itself proposed officially.

However public opinion was beginning to doubt the Parliamentary Party's efficiency. In the general election of January 1910, the O'Brienites made a good showing. Griffith, always seeking bourgeois support, seems to have considered joining it, but his party, as much as the Hibernians, disliked the League.

What did for the O'Brienites was the new position of the U.I.L. with its new hope for prompt Home Rule. In the December 1910 general election the Redmondites reasserted their position despite Murphy and Healy's clerical associates. The All for Ireland League was limited to County Cork. Its day was to come later.

Bourgeois Nationalism's split over political tactics was not equalled by any split over economic aims, like that in the Irish bourgeoisie of sixty-five years previously. The Great Hunger had reduced Ireland's population to the extent that a viable home market seemed to the Irish capitalist no longer to be a credible possibility. Similarly, the steady decrease in Irish population (and in the home market) did not encourage the development of manufacturing capital out of gombeen-capital.

Thus, when the capitalists gained control of the Nationalist Movement its economic demands did not change. In one way, economic nationalism directed by Irish capitalists represented a reduction of the demands of previous movements. As Irish Catholic capitalism increased in power, 'Home Rule' weakened from its

first Bill's separation of legislatures (with the possibility of greater Irish self-government by unilateral action) to an institutional subject Irish legislature.

More directly economic was the Catholic bourgeoisie's lack of interest in tariffs. Its victory in the 1880s was followed by the first of many 'Buy Irish' campaigns. But Parnell was alone in his suggestions for controls on imports. When, in the 1900s, local Industrial Development Associations were formed, they limited themselves to advocating such policies as Irish Trade Marks. Only a few bourgeois were attracted by Sinn Fein or by the brilliant pro-tariff polemics of the journalist, D. P. Moran. The chief spokesman for Irish capitalism was the imperialist, John Redmond, backed by such able young men as the Free Trader, Thomas Kettle, and John J. Horgan, who favoured Irish control of customs for revenue only. For the other League, the worst that Murphy's *Irish Independent* could say against the third Home Rule Bill in April 1912 was that it did not enable the proposed Irish government to run itself economically. This was a crack at the Irish Civil Service that could be accepted by Hibernians.

## V

### *The bureaucracy*

The Irish Civil Service' first duty was to the British government rather than to any Irish interest or class. It followed that it could not back either the Church of Ireland or the landlords when that government had determined to whittle away their powers. It benefited from its loyalty by becoming the strongest Unionist force outside the north-east. But this made it more than ever a chief target for the bourgeois Nationalists.

Hostility was reciprocated. By 1914, the bureaucracy's tone and policy was still set by some forty-eight heads and deputy-heads of departments and branches. Of them, only twenty were Catholics as opposed to twenty-eight Protestants, ten of whom were British. The background of twenty-two of them was either landowning or professional. As the professions had tended to draw their mores from the landowners rather than from the urban capitalists, the Civil Service was clearly bound to clash in feeling with the new Catholic bourgeoisie, even without its Unionism.

This would have mattered less had the bureaucracy not been an expanding force in Irish life. Between 1881 and 1914, four new offices were set up to deal with the economic problems of Ireland following on the 'fall of feudalism' therein; in 1881 was established the Land Commission: in 1891, the Congested Districts Board: in 1899, the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction: in 1911, the Irish Insurance Commission. These provided precedents for bureaucratic intervention in the Irish economy and the first three of these consolidated much of the landlord's power in the hands of its old allies. Further the reform of Irish local government in 1898 came ten years after its British predecessor, and then, while augmenting the Local Government Board's Business, made no provision even for limited British-type parish councils, though, in other respects, it reproduced in Ireland the British locality system. Finally there was the fact that in Plunkett's eight years at the Department of Agriculture, he could only get a subsidy for the I.A.O.S. and was unable to do any more for farmer co-operation, despite his free appointment of underlings. When he went in 1907, bourgeois and bureaucratic pressure were united for once to end the subsidy.

This expansion of bureaucratic powers was on a large scale. The post-1881 offices represented a 100% increase in its size. This was on top of the fact that its organization had never been streamlined after the manner of its British counterpart. The new departments raised further barriers against rationalization. They were autonomous and only vaguely connected with the Chief Secretary who was at once the government's administrative head and, until the development of the Secretary to the Department of Agriculture, its only administrator in the House of Commons. During Sir Horace Plunkett's period in the Agriculture Department, primary school agricultural courses were abolished by the Department of National Education which made no attempts to replace them with something to similarly help the farmers help themselves. Civil Service reform was deflected according to Home Rule prospects; the Liberals were ready to leave the task to the Home Rule government: the Unionists would not change matters in that sphere being natural allies to what was, unlike Irish landlordism, still a flourishing and expanding body.

Though national bourgeois hostility to the civil services was well-founded, the only real Nationalist expectation of change was that of its division into ministries responsible to a Home Rule parliament. When it came to the point, Irish capitalist methods could only effect minor economics. The work of nearly all departments

was essential – that of the much hated new ones most of all – and there was no way for the capitalist to de-bureaucratize it. Co-operation was out of the question. Expansion in local authority powers would lose its attraction once the national authority was gained; the Irish rate system was becoming archaic and thus even less popular than the taxes of a Home Rule government. Above all, as Home Rule prospects grew, the brighter sons of the Irish small capitalists saw in the bureaucracy an opportunity to better themselves far more promising than their fathers' business.

The Irish civil service had proved indispensable to the Union by doing what few Unionists would have had its British counterpart do. In the process, it had become an autonomous interest unbound by any traditional limitations of action, except survival. For the time, this was bound up with the cause of the Union. But there was no reason why this should always be so.

## VI

### *The Catholic Church (and education)*

The Great Famine saw clerical authority reach new heights. The priesthood ordered the starving peasants to continue to pay rent and was obeyed. This authority continued for the next few years. It broke the Tenants Right League in the 1850s.

Then the Church's political power began to decline. The Fenians with their secret oath gave it a shock. In the countryside the spread of money gave the peasant the incentive he needed to defy it to take possession of his land.

The clergy could not be excluded from politics entirely. Having been given a high place in Parnell's National League and helped bring about the fall of the Chief, it never re-established that position; it remained prominent in the U.I.L. Of that body the Bishop of Raphoe, Rory O'Donnell, was treasurer. The parish priest was a naturally more popular influence than the parish businessman who needed him accordingly.

But the priest's moral influence detracted from the capitalist's power. This was the more so in that the confidence his congregation possessed in him was often used to carry out the function of an entrepreneur. This was most vividly exemplified by the Galway priest, Fr Dooley's forming the Galway Woollen Company. It is significant that the Lisleism of Moran's *Leader*

was most appreciated among the clergy.

The priests' moral authority was enhanced by co-operation in the business of the government that they were helping the capitalists to take over. The decisive step towards this had been the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. This was now superseded by the Catholic clergy as the bureaucracy's local advisors and supporters in non-political matters.

The outstanding example of increasing clerical participation in administration was in education. Here, its claims against secularism triumphed formally in 1870, after the defeat of the Church of Ireland that had used the system for its own ends. The victory of denominationalism was applauded by the Nationalists as a defeat for the oppressor's religion. It was the more welcomed because the Famine had raised the age and thus the religious conservatism of the people. Above all, the teaching orders that had whittled away secularism provided examples of Nationalism comparing favourably with the anglocentric teaching of the National Schools.

The new National Education system was finalized in 1883. Under it the primary schools were divided by religion and placed under managers, who were usually, in the case of Catholic schools, the parish priests: in the case of Protestant ones, the local vicar. These schools were subsidized (by a fixed proportion of their cost), inspected (except in religious subjects) and supplied with textbooks (subject to denominational guidance) by the state.

The problems of secondary and university education were solved similarly. In 1878, the Beaconsfield government began subsidizing all the existing (denominational) secondary schools by their examination results. The same year, the secular Queen's University was replaced for the purposes of degree-giving by a nominal Royal University. This had the power to confer recognized degrees also on the Catholic University of Dublin which the clergy had set up in opposition to Queen's. Thirty years later, a National University of Ireland incorporating the Queen's Colleges (save Belfast, promoted to full University), the Catholic 'University' and the Royal University was set up with the clergy's participation therein. The exception to the sectarian rule was in the realm of technical education wherein until 1899 there was a gap. The first act of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Education was to prepare plans for a national network of technical schools under its direct control. The spread of this was handicapped by the shortage of technical teachers; nonetheless, by 1925, there were sixty-five such schools, mainly in the towns.

Denominationalism maintained certain grave faults. Since Cath-



olic children tended to be both more numerous and of poorer background than Protestant children, they tended to be less well educated; the state subsidy was a fixed two-thirds of schools' cost, and a poor congregation had to keep costs low accordingly. This weakness in the system was partly counteracted by the smallness of many Protestant schools. It was also noticed, on occasions, that the Catholic school manager might use his power (superior to that of a Protestant manager) to replace a well-qualified lay teacher with a less-qualified cleric. This became a lesser likelihood as I.N.T.O. grew in power after its foundation in 1866; after thirty years a dismissed teacher could appeal to the manager's bishop, though there was always the danger of collusion between the two latter arising from their estate. Again, the parents (for whom denominational education is said to be designed) had (and have) less real control over school policy than teachers or managers. There was also some waste involved in supplying separate schools according to religion. Even good Catholics would accuse Catholic clerical education of having as its chief aim the production of seminarists. Though this is only recently suspected of being a fault, it is connected with the more generally denounced 'urban' educational curricula. Finally, although Britain only started board schools in the year of the formal denominationalizing of Irish education, forty years after its beginning, and although primary education was made compulsory for both countries in 1892, dislike of secular interference made it impossible to enforce compulsion in Ireland until 1926, thus allowing Britain to overtake her educationally.

It might be put as a further objection to clerical control of education that it militated against the system, advocated by Padraic Pearse, of 'freedom to the individual school, freedom to the individual teacher, freedom as far as may be to the individual pupil'. It is only fair to admit that this was not recognized by Pearse himself. In *The Murder Machine* he came down against giving local management 'to a district council rather than left as it is at present'. He urged however that under Home Rule a national Minister for Education be appointed and national payment of teachers instituted. His objection to the 'murder machine' was on its continuing suppression of the Irish national ideal not its sectarianism. More significant educationally were his views on school organization. These were exemplified in his own boys' school, St Enda's, which he started in 1908 and ran first in Rathmines and then in Rathfarnham. There he revived in a modern form the early Irish idea of fosterage, under which a man took the care of



growing boys so as to ensure that all their talents be developed fully. At St Enda's the boys ran most of the organization themselves, Pearse and his colleagues merely training them according to their respective potentials. St Enda's survived until after 1916, despite financial troubles which killed off its equivalent, St Ita's (for girls), in 1912. It was a success partly because Pearse was a natural teacher who gathered similar good teachers around him: partly because it remained a small school with never more than 100 pupils who were drawn mainly from the more patriotic middle class (Larkin's sons attended, however). In the class society of the time, such a scheme of education could only exist for a minority.

The Nationalist bourgeois dismissed Pearse as a crank (whatever that is) and accepted without a qualm sectarian education and its corollaries. Nor did he baulk at such orders in matters of faith and morals as the extension of the Bull *Ne Temere* to Ireland in 1908, which dictated that the child in a mixed marriage be brought up a Catholic. In such matters, he was a loyal son of the Church.

But that threatened his position when its priests took posts on the Congested Districts Board. Also, the Local Government Act of 1898 in its refusal to set up parish councils was a further maintenance of clerical control against him, as well as against the people in general.

On the other hand the Catholic clergy were rather embarrassed by the outspoken sectarianism of the A.O.H. The Archbishops of Armagh and of Dublin tended to look more favourably at the All for Ireland League. Had this party done better in 1910, more would have followed them. As it was, with Home Rule so soon to be accomplished, there were few clerics below the Archbishops who cared to rock the Nationalist boat.

## VII

### *The north-east*

Nineteenth-century developments ensured support for the Union among the Ulster Protestant Nonconformists. Ulster economic expansion, maintained by the American Civil War cotton famine, justified conscious support for it immediately. Irish Catholic Na-

tionalism gave the bourgeoisie (and its Presbyterian clerical allies, fearing for their 'regium domum') a good cause to divide the workers against each other and to gain the Unionism of the Protestant majority of them. Hence the much vaunted Northern Ireland lack of class consciousness and the Ulster Protestant worker's readiness to attach himself to a movement run by his masters for his masters.

Between the Great Famine and the 1881 Land Act, the Protestant peasantry had its Ulster Custom under attack. There was a possibility that it might rejoin its Catholic equals. Guarantee of the Custom and its extension over the rest of Ireland, blocked this.

What was more, the Parliamentary Nationalist Parties never perceived adequately the nature of Ulster Protestant bigotry. They saw only its irrational manifestations and not their material basis. Thus the Nationalists could see no reason to attempt to break with even the image portrayed by Catholic bourgeois Nationalism.

Protestant opposition to Home Rule was further encouraged from outside by the unimaginative conservatism of the nineteenth-century papacy. This had its effect most relative to Ireland in 1908 when the Bull *Ne Temere* was extended thither.

'Ulster Unionism' is, understandably, negative. Only its manipulators feel positively in favour of the institutions of the Union. The manipulated dislike Irish Nationalism even more.

The Home Rule Bill of 1886 drove most of the, mainly Ulster-based, Irish Liberals into Unionism. Already its threat was reviving the Loyal Orange Order in the province. In 1886, there were sectarian riots against the Bill. From then, until today, the pattern of the history of eastern (and later central) Ulster has been one of stand-put conservatism with intervals of religious riot. The second Home Rule Bill (1893) caused such a disturbance and stimulated plans to channel the feeling behind into an organized military force. After 1910, as the threat of a third Home Rule Bill gained momentum, Ulster's oligarchs (other than such few Liberals as Lord Pirrie) were experienced enough rabble-rousers to know what was to be done.

## INTERMISSION

### *Celtic Twilight or Irish dawn?*

The Great Famine put the final touch to the distintegration of Celtic Irish culture. Those who were worst hit by it were the dwellers in the Gaeltacht: the remaining Irish-speaking areas. In one decade, the already declining numbers of Irish speakers were reduced drastically. From being over half the population, they became just over a quarter of the reduced number.

This meant a completely changed audience for the Irish creative artist. Before it, Irish writers in English had been unable to appeal to the mass of their fellow-countrymen. They wrote for a small colonial group around Dublin. If good, they wrote for the English. If very good, they were able to go to London. After the Famine, they wrote in the knowledge that the mass of Irishmen might understand them. For many years to come, few would be ready to do so, but this few would have a more important influence on Irish literature in English, than the many who continued as before.

The precursor of this trend was the Young Irelander, Thomas Davis. His propaganda writings included competent and memorable poetry and he assembled around him other literati, including one major poet, James Clarence Mangan. Though Davis died just before the Famine and Mangan just after, their tradition was maintained by the Fenian, Charles Kickham. After him, Standish O'Grady though less directly political found his inspiration in Ireland's Celtic past. This tradition would have remained an interesting side-show in Irish literature, but for the ulterior influences that were to have their results.

But Davis, as befitted a Mazzinian Nationalist, championed the maintenance of the Irish language against O'Connell. His advocacy was handicapped by his own inability to speak in Irish but the language had more effective supporters. John O'Donovan formed in 1853 an Ossianic Society to investigate the manuscripts of the Celtic Irish. Dr John MacHale, the authoritarian Archbishop of Tuam, was prominent in championing the language. The Englishman, Dr John Newman, established a Chair of Irish in his new Catholic University of Dublin. Some twenty years later, in 1876, when the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language was formed it was attacked as too moderate and breakaways from it formed a Gaelic Union in 1878.

These literary movements drew their strength from the development of post-famine Nationalism. The Irish language one was the usual expression of national consciousness reasserting itself with the rise of bourgeois and peasant. The English literary tradition was the same thing developing in the newer language.

But the first permanent expression of this occurred not in art but in sport. In November 1884, Michael Cusack, Maurice Davin and five others met in Thurles, Co. Tipperary, to found a Gaelic Athletic Association to maintain and encourage the Irish sports that were being threatened by such English imports as association football. The next month, the Archbishop of Cashel, T.W. Croke, gave the new body his support. In 1888 occurred the first all-Ireland hurling match. The G.A.A.'s importance was more than sporting; it provided the major popular unifying force in parish and county such as the elective councils of the latter were never to do. Even today, the focus of County patriotism lies mainly in its team's success.

On the other hand, the G.A.A.'s achievement was specifically rural, as rural areas had the least broken tradition of Gaelic sports. In the towns, the English sport clubs had established themselves. There, much goodwill has been forfeited by the Association's automatic expulsion of players and attenders at English sports.

Thus, the G.A.A.'s spirit has tended too often to err on the side of parochialism. This is partly because of its rural basis. Perhaps because of its wider organization, the same cannot be said of the organizing body of the Irish language movement.

In the autumn of 1893, three young men, the Protestant, Douglas Hyde, the Priest, Eugene O'Growney, and the Ulster Catholic, John (Eoin) MacNeill, formed a Gaelic League (*Connradh na Gaedhilge*) to replace the weak Gaelic Union. Hyde became its President and, under the capable secretaryship of MacNeill, the League flourished. O'Growney and MacNeill wrote Irish text books. Many Unionists joined it (but few relative to other groups). Of the Nationalists, only Dillon tended to be aloof. The clergy supported it, though Maynooth was hostile. After 1900, it gained Irish teaching in school hours (1906), Irish qualifications for teachers in the *Gaeltacht* (1906) and Irish as a matriculation subject in the new National University (1910-3).

But *Connradh na Gaedhilge* was more than just a movement of linguistic revivalism. It was clearly against the post-famine puritanism of the country (which was possible why Maynooth disliked it). It ran 'turas' or open air excursions to places of interest or beauty, summer colleges with a wide curricula and *Ceilidhthe*.

It was also broadly nationalistic in its effect. Hyde himself, though he maintained as rigorously non-political, saw it as reviving the Irish national spirit that was necessary to their prosperity. More especially, it encouraged its members to read W.E.H. Lecky's *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* and later Mrs Alice Stopford Greene's *The Making of Ireland and its Undoing*, both of which stimulated political Nationalism in them. This nationalism varied in spirit according to its possessor; in Padraig Pearse, it was broad: in such theorists of Irish capitalism as D.P. Moran and occasionally, Arthur Griffith, it could be very narrow. But few could stay long in the League without being won to it. At last, in 1916, it overwhelmed Hyde's determination to keep the League non-political and forced him thereby from the Presidency.

The effect of the linguistic movement is fairly measurable. This is not so of the English language literary movement outside its own area. The beginning of its expansion into the matrix of future Irish writing in English was the founding of literary societies in the towns during the 1880s. These were the outcome of the general political frustration of actual and potential physical force elements as against the triumphant parliamentary Nationalism of the bourgeoisie. The former saw the hope of political revival in the Parnellite split. Parnell's death and his succession by the conservative, Redmond, left them more frustrated. In the 1890s were founded two major literary societies and the Irish Literary Theatre.

At the head of the movement were Standish O'Grady, as Ireland's leading national literary figure, and John O'Leary, the Fenian. The latter attracted back to Ireland the young poet, William Butler Yeats. Yeats found the movement to be an excellent audience, and the Celtic myths to be inspiration for him. Such were also factors stimulating activity from George Russell (Æ), Lady Gregory and J.M. Synge. Later, they attracted back to Dublin the novelist, George Moore. Of these people, only he possessed any sort of nationalist background, and this was neutralized completely for him by aestheticism.

In 1900 the movement found a semi-political shape in Cumann na nGaedhail. Its supporters began to enter active politics. By 1907 Griffith was denouncing Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* on its first appearance.

This development is less surprising when it is realized that literati and Republicans were at cross purposes. The former wanted an audience and raised high claims to their rights to one. The latter

wanted propaganda alone. Neither side was prepared to surrender. Of the two, however, it was the Republicans that were in politics.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE REVOLUTION SUBVERTED 1910-1923

*'Is there any other point to which you would wish to draw my attention?'*

*'To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time.'*

*'The dog did nothing in the night-time.'*

*'That was the curious incident.'*

A. Conan Doyle, 'Silver Blaze' *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes.*

#### I

From 1905, a Liberal government was again in power in the United Kingdom. In its Irish policy, it appeared as little better than a pale shadow of the Unionists.

But, in 1906, a Home Rule constitution had been granted the Transvaal which had recently been up in arms against the British.

In 1907, two M.P.s of the Irish Parliamentary Party had resigned their seats, one of them fighting the subsequent bye-election for the new Sinn Fein Party.

In that year, also, James Larkin had begun to organize the unskilled workers in Belfast.

From 1908, there was a gradual takeover of the I.R.B. by a group of impatient men, led by a former Fenian prisoner, Thomas J. Clarke. This included the Sinn Feiners, Bulmer Hobson and Sean MacDiarmada (now appointed National Organiser), P.S. O'Hegarty and the Ulstermen, Denis McCullough and Dr Patrick McCartan. These people were beginning to honeycomb social strongpoints with their own men in preparation for armed rising. In 1911, they would take over the I.R.B. from the old guard.

In 1909, O'Brien and Healy had formed their anti-Hibernian All for Ireland League.

In the same year, various groups of Socialist Nationalists formed a Socialist Party of Ireland.

Also in that year, the Countess Constance Markievicz and Bulmer Hobson founded a republican body of boy scouts (Fianna Eireann).

All this meant at the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century was that the Irish Parliamentary Party had to establish Irish Home Rule as an immediate possibility. If it did not, it was liable to be supplanted in its position at the head of Irish Nationalism by an organization more radical in aims and strategy or tactics or all three.

The general election of January 1910 placed Redmond where he could force the Liberal government to grant a new Home Rule Bill. The general election of December restated this position and showed that the United Ireland League enjoyed more support than at any time since 1903.

The third Home Rule Bill appeared in April 1912. It was very much like the 1893 Bill; it included the subordination of the Irish legislature to that of the United Kingdom and no control by the Irish over customs.

It could not satisfy the Republicans. However, they were prepared to accept it, with varying degrees of reluctance, as a provisional measure that might lead to something better.

This moderation was not shared by the Unionists of the north-east; they feared an Ireland controlled by priests and Hibernians. They had allies. Unionists in the other three provinces agreed with their fears, though, being an upper class garrison population, their path proved divergent from that of their Ulster allies. More important was the British Conservative Party, now led by a colonial bigot, Andrew Bonar Law, and ready to ally with Satan against the Liberals. British Conservatism and Irish Unionism gave Ulster Unionism a leader in Britain's ex-Solicitor-General, the Irish Protestant, Sir Edward Carson. But Ulster Protestantism's real organizing genius was a stolid stockbroker from Co. Down, James Craig.

Even before the Home Rule Bill was introduced, Ulster oligarchs had been preparing opposition. The armed blacklegs that had been used against Larkinism in 1907 were reorganized. In July, 1912, a Hibernian riot was used as an excuse for Protestant sectarian disturbances which had the extra use of breaking up the I.T.G.W.U.'s Belfast organization. From September 1912 a Covenant against Home Rule was signed by some 218,206 Ulstermen. A para-military body, the Ulster Volunteers, was supplied with German guns and encouragement. The British army was infiltrated with Unionist supporters. All this was aimed to cause Ulster

(or as much of it as possible) to secede from home-ruling Ireland and to act as a separate state under a provisional government, until Britain would let it be reunited within its parliament.

Government and Parliamentary Party did nothing. The former was conscious of its minority position and feared to compromise itself within British capitalism. The latter was sure, once the Bill was passed, Ulster would accept the fait accompli. It feared also that too precipitate action against the Unionists would embitter them and make difficult the uniting of a home ruling Ireland.

Thus Ulster militarism was allowed to grow until it could not be crushed save by civil war.

But its appeasement by government and U.I.L. caused a revival of Nationalist discontent. The I.R.B. spread its organization. More open was the final establishment of a parliamentary Labour Party at the I.T.U.C.'s Clonmel Congress in 1912. Within the new party, Connolly's group [now the Independent Labour Party (Ireland)] preached non-sectarian and clearly Socialist Republicanism. Outside Belfast, the I.T.G.W.U. expanded.

But, for some time, the larger Irish capitalists (Protestant and Catholic) had been preparing to do battle with Larkinism. In 1909 a Cork Employers' Federation had been formed. In 1911 a similar body had been set up in Dublin.

Now the latter moved to the attack over Larkin's organization of the workers in W.M. Murphy's Dublin United Tramway Company. The employers of the Federation locked out all I.T.G.W.U. members from August 1913 to January 1914.

The Lock-Out split nationalist Ireland. The United Ireland League remained formally neutral; it was the bigger Dublin employers who were opposing Larkin, and they were led by the All for Irelander, Murphy. The Church hedged similarly, fearing for its popularity. Most Fenians and Sinn Feiners sympathized with Larkin, though Griffith and Hobson opposed him. The national literati tended to support him. Through George Russell, the farmer co-operative movement appeared to be beginning to reach an understanding with the urban Socialists.

On the other hand, the Unionists were united against Larkin.

But what was decisive was the refusal of the British trade unionists to help their Irish comrades positively by blacking Dublin goods.

In the end the employers won a pyrrhic victory; even where the workers concerned signed a document renouncing I.T.G.W.U. membership, they remained members thereof in practice. But there were other results. There was an understanding between Connolly

and Russell, the theorist of rural co-operation. More important was the revelation of two facts; first that the time of the general strike was not yet, except for very limited purposes; second that the Irish worker could not rely on 'outside help. Accordingly, Connolly maintained in being an Irish Citizen Army that he had started in October 1913 to protect trade unionists from the employers' thugs. This was now organized labour's military arm, and would be used to help it achieve its aims. By the middle of 1914 the I.C.A. claimed 1,000 members.

Born more directly from the frustrations surrounding the Home Rule Bill was the Irish Volunteers. It had been demanded as an offset to the Ulster body by many journals for some time. Now in November 1913 it was founded on the initiative of Eoin MacNeill, the Secretary of Connradh na Gaedhilge, who became President of the force.

MacNeill was himself a mild supporter of the U.I.L. Most other Volunteer officials were similarly inclined. Padraig Pearse became Director of Organization, his friend, Thomas MacDonagh, Director of Training and the ex-British Consul, Sir Roger Casement, Treasurer. The force included, however, many members of the I.R.B. and of Sinn Fein; one of these, Bulmer Hobson, became Secretary.

At the same time as the Irish Volunteers, there was formed a women's group, Cumann na mBan, to act as a nursing body to them.

In March 1914, Redmond, who feared an Irish civil war, moved to take over the Irish Volunteers. In June he succeeded in placing a majority of his nominees on the Volunteer Council. He was backed by MacNeill and Casement, but also by Hobson, who thereby had to leave the I.R.B.

With the Volunteers secure, Redmond proposed compromise to the Ulster Protestants. This offered those counties that wished a six year exclusion from the jurisdiction of the proposed Home Rule regime. This plan collapsed because the Unionists demanded the similar exclusion of Tyrone and Fermanagh – two counties with Nationalist majorities.

At the outbreak of the First World War, Redmond joined Carson to promise support for Britain against Germany. In return, the Home Rule Bill was enacted, although suspended for the War's duration.

Redmond's support for Britain was backed by most nationalists. They were told, and believed, that they had Home Rule. They had, also, war-booms in agriculture and industry; between 1914

and 1918 Ireland had a favourable trade balance for the first time since 1904; Irish joint stock bank deposits rose 1910-1920 from £62,500,000 to £200,000,000. Appetites were further whetted by promises of war supplies contracts and of former German trade. The army's separation allowance gave a regular income to many homes that had never known one.

But there were dissidents. In September 1914 the original (1913) Volunteer Command ejected the Redmondites and denounced the British alliance, demanding as its price effective Home Rule immediately. Only 12,000 of the 180,000 Volunteers in training followed them. But they included not only the I.R.B. and Sinn Fein elements but former Home Rule supporters like Pearse (now an I.R.B. member) and MacNeill. The Redmondite Volunteers were reformed as the Irish National Volunteers. MacNeill's group kept their name but were more generally referred to by the Redmondite *Freeman's Journal* as the 'Sinn Fein Volunteers'. That nickname gave in practice much free publicity to Sinn Fein.

But as far as general political views were concerned, it was fair enough. Most Volunteers shared a vague form of Sinn Fein theory. The division came at that point. The right-wing included MacNeill, Hobson and Griffith, all of whom (especially the last) were unsympathetic to Labour aspirations. The left-wing included Pearse, MacDonagh and Ceannt, supported by Thomas Clarke; they were less narrowly bourgeois; of them Pearse was developing towards the end of his life a theory that challenged the concept of private property. All the Irish Volunteers tended to have greater respect for the Church than did the members of the I.C.A. However, to the former, intellectual politics was placed second to moral training. Pearse, remembering that the national movement had been betrayed many times before, dedicated himself to seeing that it did not fail again. MacSwiney of Cork trained himself similarly. Behind this determination was the recognition that this was Ireland's last chance; that the Gaelic League might never again fire Irish nationalism, as its cultural basis was already weak enough.

The left wing of the Volunteers began to make contact with the Irish Citizen Army. This body had lost much of its strength: many had joined the Irish Volunteers: many others (such as Sean O'Casey) grew impatient with what they deemed its undue nationalism and left it. After the outbreak of the war, Larkin went to America to help the Labour struggle there and to contact the I.R.B.'s allies in Clan na Gael. Connolly was now in charge of the I.T.G.W.U. and of the I.C.A. His Republicanism was now rein-



forced by the same pressures affecting the Irish Volunteers. In addition, the collapse of the Second International before the pressures stimulated by war, left Irish labour as the only force ready to attack that war and thus perhaps establish a Socialist Europe.

The combination of Volunteer and Socialist produced the Easter Rising of April, 1916. But the Volunteers were divided over the necessity or otherwise of German support. The right-wing favoured this; the left-wing, with Connolly, prepared to fight without it, and isolate the right in a revolutionary situation. Unfortunately, Casement was captured by the British with the supply of German arms that would reassure the right. At the last moment MacNeill cancelled the parades that were to result in nation-wide insurrection. This ensured that 220 only of the Citizen Army, 1,000 of the Dublin Brigade of the Volunteers and a Volunteer detachment from Maynooth, Co. Kildare, with aid from Fianna Eireann and Cumann na mBan, took part in a revolt by themselves in the city of Dublin, while unco-ordinated risings occurred in Cos. Galway and Wexford and a single skirmish in Co. Cork. Even so, and despite appalling luck, the Rising lasted nearly a week.

The manner of the executions of the revolt's leaders (especially that of the wounded Connolly) and revelations of British atrocities in its suppression (including the attempt at complicity in the actions of a homicidal lunatic) justified the hastening of the Irish's changed heart against England.

In August 1915 the United Ireland League had been sufficiently doubtful about its own popularity to initiate a series of County conventions to revive support.

And it had grounds for doubt. Many National Volunteers had died in France without formal recognition of their corporate identity, while the Ulster Volunteers were given a special division. What was more, there was a permanent threat of Irish conscription imposed by the British Parliament and to be resented as such. This threat was increased from May 1915 after the British Government had opened its ranks to such Unionists as Carson and F.E. Smith. It had not been weakened when in December 1915 a Conscription Bill was introduced for Britain only. In economics, wages had risen at a slower rate than prices (£1 in March 1914 = 13/- in March 1916) and much of the separation allowance's value was correspondingly reduced.

Among the after-effects of the Rising was the (untrue) smear that the Parliamentary Party had cheered the executions. The impression of treachery was joined with one of futility by a government proposal for immediate Home Rule of which Unionist



objections forced withdrawal.

But as yet, the surviving leaders of the Rising were in British prisons. Even so, they were preparing to revive the struggle. They had a leader in each jail. Such men included Eamon de Valera, by chance the only surviving commandant of the Rising, and a young civil servant and Fenian, Michael Collins.

In this period was being determined the social nature of the independence struggle. The I.T.U.C. (and Labour Party) had as a whole always failed to understand Connolly's Republicanism. At its Sligo Congress in August 1916 with the Belfast co-operatives organizer, Thomas Johnson, in the Chair, it stood in memory both of Republicans killed in Dublin and of Volunteers killed in France.

More significant was the I.T.G.W.U.'s withdrawal from the national struggle and the simultaneous weakening of the I.C.A. This severed organized Labour's only formal link with the Republicans. It also severed the Republicans from much existing Irish Socialist thought.

The I.T.G.W.U. withdrew from Republicanism for what seemed sound ideological reasons. Connolly's successor as Acting Secretary, William O'Brien, was a disciple of his teachings. For O'Brien, syndicalism meant building up working class organization till it could replace the bourgeois state; Republicanism meant letting the national issue be clarified so that it would not interfere with the establishment of Socialism. This did not preclude a revolutionary, internationalist stance on such issues as the Soviet Revolution in Russia. It did mean, in the hands of an organization man such as O'Brien, leaving the national struggle to the bourgeois Nationalists, as being something in which an international Socialist had no interest. The imaginative activism with which Connolly transcended his ideology was forgotten.

O'Brien was supported by Thomas Johnson, a good Socialist but one with many English prejudices. These two were in 1919 to take office respectively as Secretary and Treasurer of the I.T.U.C. (they exchanged positions the next year). Their practical policies were based on the assumptions that an inevitable republic would include the whole island: that then the national movement would divide socially and unite on these lines with equivalent potential divisions in the quondam Unionist movement: that therefore the Labour movement's first duty was to grow in strength and spread Socialism (especially in the north-east).

In December 1916, David Lloyd George became Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. He initiated his government's Irish policy

by repatriating the Republican internees (not convicts serving sentences, like de Valera, until June 1917). They returned to Ireland and revived their institutions. The I.R.B. Supreme Council was reconstituted to include Collins who became also Director of Organization for the Volunteers. Griffith revived his journal, the demand for which had increased due to his prestige as the 'ideologist of Easter Week'.

For the Parliamentary Party the situation had deteriorated since Easter Week. In January 1917 its paper, the *Freeman's Journal*, estimated that a pound would buy only what ten shillings and eightpence halfpenny would have bought in July 1914. The farmers were particularly hurt. Imports of colonial butter wounded the dairy farmer. A potato-blight injured the pig-rearing small farmer. Most farmers were angered by the bad harvest of 1916 and the following compulsory tillage order of January 1917. Over all, rumours of impending conscription continued. The country was increasingly cynical about parliamentary tactics, not only of the U.I.L. but of the All-for-Ireland League; in fact in November 1916 the former won a seat from the latter.

The I.R.B. combined with Sinn Fein to cover Ireland in a front 'National Aid Association' for participants in the Rising and relatives thereof. In February 1917, it put up an 'Independent' candidate at a bye-election in North Roscommon. He was the Papal Count, George N. Plunkett, father of Joseph Plunkett, leader and martyr of the Rising. He won the seat with an over-all majority over two Home Rule candidates. He announced that he would follow the Hungarian Policy and not sit at Westminster.

Events continued to favour the Republicans. There was another bad harvest in 1917. The Government had appointed a Food Controller for the whole British Isles; his politics were inevitably anglo-centric. Food price controls tended to hurt the Irish farmer without helping the Irish townsman.

But government policy was even more confused on the Irish national issue. This was natural; it depended for support on the Unionists, yet, for reasons of foreign and military policy, it could not afford to alienate Nationalist Ireland too much. Thus, after new proposals for partitionist Home Rule had been rejected, the Government shelved the issues to an Irish Convention. The Republicans abstained from this. It resulted merely in dividing the ranks of Parliamentary Nationalism between Redmond and the old guard (who were still prepared to accept Home Rule) and Devlin, allied to the Bishops and the All-for-Ireland League, who wanted Dominion status. In any case, the report of the Convention was

overshadowed. A week before it appeared, in April 1918, the Government initiated a serious attempt to conscript Ireland, which could be stopped only by a unified campaign of all Nationalist groups. The next month it arrested the leaders of Sinn Fein on pretext of a 'German plot'. It is not surprising that, in all the bye-elections of 1917 and 1918, the Irish Parliamentary Party held only the Hibernian strongholds of South Armagh and East Tyrone and Waterford City, where on Redmond's death his son held the seat.

The general election of December 1918 was the first operating under manhood suffrage. It was fought, outside Ulster, Dublin University and a few other constituencies with Unionist candidates, between Parliamentarians and Republicans.

The Parliamentary Party, led by Dillon, took its stand on Dominion status to be achieved by Parliamentary means.

Against such a line were the Republicans. Their official political expression was Sinn Fein. It had been led by de Valera since October 1917. Then its aims had been changed from dual monarchy to 'securing the international recognition of Ireland as an Independent Irish Republic' which time 'the Irish people may by referendum freely choose their own form of government'. However, the means of achieving this remained the Hungarian policy. The social programme was much as before, though including now the guarantee of the living wage and later a demand for more houses. The All-for-Ireland League renounced its seats in favour of Sinn Fein. Healy's nephew, young Kevin Higgins, was a candidate thereof.

Behind the Party was the I.R.B. Supreme Council. The intrigues of this body had replaced the dual monarchist, Griffith, with the Republican commandant, de Valera. It was dedicated to maintaining the Irish Republic that it held to have existed since 1858. But this was all: consistency in political aims appeared as conservatism in social views. The discipline of secret societies tends to breed Bonapartes rather than democrats and many I.R.B. members had tendencies towards the former style. More specifically, the Supreme Council was composed of men who were, at best (like Liam Mellows and, perhaps, Harry Boland) prepared to use social programmes to reinforce the political aims and at least (like Collins and the majority) eager to avoid such programmes for fear of jeopardizing those aims. This division was based on an unconscious disagreement as to the nature of the Irish Republic: a question that only Connolly had considered deeply. Occasional demands for a 'Co-operative Commonwealth' or even a 'Workers'

Republic' were not backed by clear analysis. As yet the significance of this lay in the future.

More obvious militants were those in the Republican movements' military arm: the Irish Volunteers. Forces of this body were already making attacks on the police (R.I.C.) to obtain arms to protect the Republic. Volunteers were most generally farmers' younger sons, farm labourers, unemployed men and others of the propertyless. Their Army Council was run democratically. Above all, they could not be separated from local problems or social aspirations. But, for the moment, all such aims were centred in the single word: Republic.

That it was so was accepted by organized Labour. As leader of Sinn Fein, de Valera had bidden Labour wait. Its leaders were happy to do this. Between 1916 and 1920; the I.T.G.W.U. was increasing its membership figures from 5,000 to 130,000. Much of this increase came from among the building workers and from the rural areas that Larkin had only begun to enter. Wartime prosperity encouraged a tolerant attitude on the part of employers. The farm labourers had gained a 70% wage increase in October 1917. In Belfast, too, class consciousness was gaining ground. But here, in July 1920, Carson would be able to stimulate bigotry and revulsion from the Irish War of Independence into producing vast sectarian and anti-trade unionist riots. And trade union expansion involved increased trade union bureaucracy and conservatism. Many of the new provincial organizers were politically naive or even Hibernian.

But Labour's petty bourgeois consciousness encouraged separation of political and economic action enough already.

Its leaders' neutrality in the national struggle loosened the ties of many in or sympathetic to the movement. Of these, some, such as Richard Corish and Cathal O'Shannon, would return to Labour politics under independence; others, including Joseph MacGrath, Sean MacEntee and Peadar O'Donnell, would be attracted elsewhere. The I.C.A. became a left wing adjunct of the Volunteers rather than their pace-maker. The machinery, such as it was, was allowed to fall into disarray. When Harry Boland offered O'Brien the Republican candidacies of four seats in Dublin City, the latter could not accept them. This stimulated internal dissension. From America, Larkin denounced such political quietism. From 1919, his professed supporters would run a breakaway Dublin Trades Council, with P.T. Daly (who had grudges to settle with O'Brien) as secretary. More ideologically significant would be the conversion in 1921 of a revived S.P.Y. (1) into the Communist



Party of Ireland, led by Connolly's young son Roderic, and excluding O'Brien, O'Shannon and others.

Sinn Fein won the general election of 1918, as far as Ireland was concerned. It returned 73 out of 105 candidates, despite the imprisonment of most of them. Those who were free proclaimed themselves on January 21st, 1919 an independent Irish Parliament ('Dail Eireann') as envisaged by the Hungarian Policy.

The Deputies of Dail Eireann ('Teachta Dalai') had been chosen as candidates by the Secretaries of Sinn Fein, Collins and Boland, because they were unlikely to be squeamish about the means to be used to maintain the Republic. But there does not seem to have been any social criteria for their appointment beyond the general acceptance of the Sinn Fein programme.

In fact, the first Dail had nearly two-thirds of it made up by men from the urban professional and white-collar classes, another quarter by capitalists and the remaining 10% by farmers. Many had joined Sinn Fein after 1916. A bitter veteran of that Party, P.S. O'Hegarty, was later to remark that the 'politicians' had taken it over. More accurately what had seemed likely in 1910 was now achieved; the bourgeoisie was disillusioned with orthodox parliamentary tactics.

There was a natural division of interests between propertyless Volunteers and bourgeois T.D.s. This was not as obvious as it later became. The Sinn Fein programme was immediately acceptable to all. The Dail augmented it at its first meeting by a vague idealistic and often self-contradictory Democratic Programme, despite Collins's fears that this would 'split the nation'. Above all, as with the pre-1916 Volunteers and indeed, with most 'pure' national movements, the morale was everything: policy nothing. The role accepted by Eamon de Valera, as president of Dail Eireann, was that of the man who kept things that way.

Until Irish independence was finally recognized the policy of the Dail, and of its cabinet under de Valera, was to maintain itself as the official representative body of the Irish Republic. Opinions differed as to how this would best be done. On the one hand, Griffith favoured his long-standing policy of passive resistance to the British. On the other hand, Collins advocated a physical force strategy to be carried out by the Volunteers, responsible only to the I.R.B. The disagreement was resolved on the same day as the Dail first assembled; a fight between Volunteers and R.I.C. resulted in the death of two of the latter. The Dail accepted responsibility for this tacitly, and continued to do so as the ensuing War of Independence developed. In August Cathal



Brugha (Charles Burgess), the Dail's Minister for Defense, placed the Volunteers under the Dail's official authority by imposing on them an oath of loyalty to that assembly as the Government of the Irish Republic. This was done against the I.R.B. From then on the Volunteers were the army of the Irish Republic or Irish Republican Army. Finally, in 1921, the Dail accepted explicitly responsibility for all actions of the I.R.A.

The I.R.A.'s allegiance to Dail Eireann not only justified its military actions but made it the latter's police force. The Dail Cabinet established all parts of the basic government machine, including a functioning judiciary, a consular service and a Department of Finance capable of floating a national loan. In this, it was aided by the magnificent discipline of the local councils which Sinn Fein captured in the elections of January and June 1920.

However, the more positive social proposals of Sinn Fein had to be postponed until a fuller organization developed. Though the colonial administration had been superseded in the fundamentals of government, it remained capable of thwarting the Dail in wider policy.

But in one field, the Republic made its presence felt and revealed its class limitations thereby. In Connacht and in Co. Kerry, smallholders and landless men seized for division large estates in their areas. The Dail had already prepared a land settlement scheme and proposals for a land bank to finance purchases. In May 1920, it set up the first special Land Arbitration Court in Co. Galway to decide each land claim on its merits. Such courts boasted of tributes to their impartiality from Unionist gentry. The verdicts of such courts were executed by the I.R.A. Not surprisingly where it had to carry out such duties, the area was the least active in the national struggle.

The land policy was merely the outward sign that the Republic was prepared consciously to collaborate with the privileged classes far beyond the call of necessity. Through Griffith's friend, Oliver St. John Gogarty, the Dail leaders met many of the Union establishments; Unionist and Parliamentary Nationalist.

Such a policy could be faulted on two counts. International working-class support for the Irish Republic was far less than for its contemporary in Russia. But the most obvious example of that was the half-heartedness of British Labour. And it can be attributed to the metropolitan worker's normal coolness towards a colonial war.

More certainly, Sinn Fein in action offered as little to the Protestant worker of the north-east, as to his anglo-centric boss.

Alienation was deepened by an unofficial boycott of Belfast's goods begun in Connacht in January 1920. The Belfast riots in the following July were merely the worst of that year. In turn, they caused the Dail to formalize the boycott. Against this background, Lloyd George passed his Better Government of Ireland Act. The partition of Ireland was formalized by giving the north-eastern oligarchs six Ulster counties, including Fermanagh and Tyrone. This was the maximum area that Craig and his allies could control. Since 1920 'Northern Ireland' affects the politics of the other twenty-six counties only negatively, through its very separation.

Irish Labour was still gathering the fruits of political inactivity. From May to December 1920, it organized a strike against the public carriage of British arms, though with little effect. The next year the Party abstained again from opposing Sinn Fein at a new general election for fear of jeopardizing the national struggle. But then it demanded the conscription of non-Republican capital. Nothing happened.

The trade unions had a further problem. During the World War, an Irish Farmers' Union had developed from County Farmers' Associations. Failing to gain support among the smallholders, it remained accordingly the preserve of the larger farmers. For these, the big problem was trade union organization of their labourers. In practice, by May 1920, the I.F.U. was as much a union-breaking body as the Dublin Employers' Federation had been in 1913.

From July 1920 to July 1921, the British Government tried to crush the Irish Republic while keeping the pretence of using purely police action. This entailed using special military police forces: 'the Auxiliaries' and 'the Black and Tans'. All this did was reduce the island to chaos, outside Northern Ireland and Munster, the province in which the I.R.A. had always been most active. But both sides wanted a truce. From July 10th, 1921 negotiations continued for an Anglo-Irish treaty. Post-war expenses of British government made the forcible maintenance even of the 1920 Act an uneconomic proposition. The Republic were ready to talk.

The period of the truce saw a sudden blossoming of working-class radicalism. Already, as a contrast to the quietism of Labour's leaders, there had been signs of unrest. Many strikes had occurred under a red flag. In May 1920, Knocklong Creamery, Co. Limerick, had been taken over by the workers, and in May 1921, the Arigna coal mines in Co. Leitrim were similarly seized. But in each case revolutionary action had been the means merely to higher wages. Nor did Labour or Communist leadership try to

make them into anything bigger. Labour waited with a vengeance. Now the rank and file took more decisive moves: In August 1921 the workers at Cleeves' mill and bakery at Bruree, Co. Limerick, seized control of it and ran it under the red flag. In September a soviet proclaimed its control over the port of Cork. Most significant was the activity of the herdsmen in the lands around Toora-hara and Kilfenora in Co. Clare. Instead of demanding the division of the lands that they had seized from the owners they ran them as a soviet. Such activities took place without interference from the I.R.A. in its strongest areas. And the I.R.A. was restoring its membership.

On December 6th, 1921 were signed the Articles of Agreement for a Treaty between Great Britain and Ireland. As a result, the twenty-six counties held Dominion status as the Irish Free State (Saorstat Eireann). This included a definite and direct oath of loyalty to the King of England, but left the state free to fix her own customs. Partition had to be recognized, but Northern Ireland's boundaries were to be delineated by a commission. This might possibly reduce its area to an uneconomic farm around Belfast such as would have to be reunited with the Saorstat. The British were allowed to retain their Irish naval bases.

These Articles were opposed by de Valera – less because of the maintainance of partition or the British naval presence than because the formula containing these did not allow for the more intransigent Republicans. When the Dail accepted them de Valera resigned and formed a specifically Republican Party (Cumann na Poblachta). Griffith, who had led the Treaty delegation, became President. Collins, who had been with him, led the majority of the I.R.B. to support the Treaty. He headed a Provisional Government to transfer the colonial power from the British.

The new dual administration had to face the problems following the War of Independence. Many rural industries, most notably the co-operative creameries, had been burnt by the British. Prices of agricultural goods were beginning their post-war decline. Unemployment was estimated by the Labour leader, Johnson, as reaching the figure 112,000. With the end of the truce a crime wave had begun. And, even more unsettling to a bourgeois regime, was the fact that social unrest was continuing; in May it culminated in Munster in the seizure and subsequent managing of factories and private creameries by the workers therein.

More immediately dangerous was the attitude of a majority of the I.R.A. This comprised eight out of its fourteen divisions and three of its five independent brigades. The soldiers had sacrificed

much for the Republic. In its name they had put off demanding greater material benefits and had told civilians of their class to desist from such demands. For many the Republic had taken the place of social thought. Now they were told it never existed: many of them felt betrayed.

But Republican army leaders were divided. Some wanted immediate military action. Others feared to alienate the popular basis necessary to preserve the Republic and hoped that the Saorstat Constitution would manage to preserve it within the Treaty. The latter body had affinities to the position of de Valera and the politicians who considered that the Treaty was needlessly dividing the country: that the British would have accepted more.

The Treatyites were similarly divided. Collins and the soldiers (now the Saorstat Army) feared the spread of communism among the forces: feared also that civil war would exacerbate matters; hoped for a Republican Constitution. Griffith and the civilians underestimated the opposition to the Treaty and believed that it could be crushed swiftly and business restored as usual.

The post-Treaty debate continued, as it had begun, in a completely formalistic manner. Meanwhile the Labour Party went to the other extreme and tried to ignore the Treaty in the name of a 'Workers' Republic' while denouncing 'militarism' and accepting practically, the authority of the Treaty-ite regime. The C.P.I. and the I.C.A. gave unconditional support to the Republicans, reviving in this cause Labour's 1919 slogan of 'First the Republic, then the Workers' Republic. [Only Larkin from an American prison called for a war for a Workers' Republic: he was ignored.]

Clashes between pro- and anti-Treatyites had resulted in April in the establishment of an Anti-Treaty H.Q. in the Four Courts in Dublin. The next month Collins and de Valera, on behalf of the moderates on both sides, signed a pact. By this the Treaty would be ignored and, after a formal general election, the two sides would unite in a government to get from Britain the best settlement possible, without actually breaking any agreement. At the same time Collins endeavoured to unite all old Republicans in attacks on Northern Ireland, where the regime was keeping order only through a blatantly sectarian police force. These long shots might have succeeded but for two things. British pressure made the Saorstat Constitution far less Republican than had been hoped. Then, in June, the electors voted for candidates of the Labour and Farmers (I.F.U.-sponsored) Parties, both of which accepted the Treaty, as against the Republicans. The Workers' Republic only won 2,600 votes less than 'The Republic', all but one of its eigh-



teen candidates being returned. The civilian Treatyites, who had always disliked the Pact, persuaded Collins to repudiate it. The new government was composed only of Treatyite ministers. At the end of the month it ordered the bombardment of the Anti-Treatyite garrison in the Four Courts, two days before the third Dail was to meet. De Valera allied himself with the besieged garrison. Civil war had begun.

Against the Republicans was the majority of the people. They were tired of war and ready to swallow the absence of a Republic, especially if the existence of this meant a revived Anglo-Irish struggle, as the Treatyites claimed.

The charge of Republican militarism was sustained by the fact that until October the Army Council of the I.R.A. was the Republicans' only executive. De Valera, Brugha, Austin Stack and the other ex-Ministers took subordinate roles in the struggle. When a political body was set up it was composed of Anti-Treaty deputies of the Second (Republican) Dail. It took that body's name on the grounds that it had never been properly dissolved, and that the Third Dail was a body usurping Republican functions on behalf of the Saorstat. Such an argument was rather too sophisticated for most people who remembered that elections had taken place for the Third Dail and that the Anti-Treatyites had readily participated in them.

What was more, such propaganda (and other esoteric claims concerning the Oath to the King, the credentials of the Treaty Delegation and the betrayal of the Collins-de Valera Pact) was not counter-balanced by economic proposals. Most leading Republicans had accepted quite happily the policies of the Republican Dails. Such a negative outlook maintained the alienation between Republicans and the Labour Party, which acted (true at least, to its avoidance of understanding the state) as the Saorstat's loyal opposition. In Connacht, where much of the Republic's military strength lay, its advantages were cancelled out by the fact of the I.R.A.'s previous anti-peasant role. In Munster, positive social feeling was allied to a strong I.R.A., to create the ideal circumstances for prolonged warfare on the basis of the 'Munster Republic'. But the Republican Army made little attempt to encourage the socialist elements in this area, and discouraged them actively on occasions.

The Republican leaders included a few who tended to question this attitude. Boland, perhaps their best mind, was killed in August 1922. Mellows and Peadar O'Donnell were imprisoned from July. Mellows was shot (a classic 'necessary murder') in Decem-



ber. In his last months, however, he produced a series of policy proposals that show well the strength and weaknesses of left-wing Republicanism.

*Notes from Mountjoy Jail* develops the tradition of Pearse rather than of Connolly. It proposes a measure of state ownership (specifically in banking and in transport) and a crash programme of land division. It is clearly anti-capitalistic and in favour of the Republic of the propertiless. At the same time, it justifies itself in terms of an idealized Celtic Irish past, and justifies the Republic of the poor by reference to the Republic of 1919, which was rather a different matter.

Of all Mellows' proposals, the only immediate action taken by the Republicans was in re-establishing the 'Second Dail'. As a result, the forces of Labour and of left-wing Republicanism remained separated.

The loss on the Treatyite side was in its leading personalities. In August, Griffith died and Collins fell in battle. The loss of Griffith was the loss of an orthodox, narrow, bourgeois democrat. Collins is less easy to analyse. His posthumous book, *The Path to Freedom*, shows a harking back to Celtic Ireland, similar to Mellows'. However, its arguments reveal an essential vagueness as to the nature of democracy and a belief in 'co-operation' as between Capital and Labour. Added to many details of the latter part of his career, the book would seem to presage a possible negotiated end to the Civil War and a succeeding Bonapartist dictatorship ('to prevent Communism'), such as only he would have had the prestige to impose.

His successors could act only as trustees for counter-revolution. Against the divided left, the elite groups were united as never before. The Saorstat gave the bourgeoisie that control of the colonial bureaucracy that it wanted. Unduly anglophil members of the latter went to England, and were replaced by officials of the first Republic. Bourgeois and bureaucrat united, with the blessing of the hierarchy, to attack Republicans and anti-capitalist agitators. All over Ireland wage reductions were imposed with government blessing. The Limerick and Tipperary soviets were reduced by I.F.U. boycott; the Clare soviets by farmers' units under military direction, anticipating events in the 1930s. The farm labourers' organizations were crushed with the aid of blackleg labour. By April 1923 Irish radicalism was on the defensive.

In this month, James Larkin returned from the U.S.A., where he had been imprisoned for nearly three years as a victim of Mitchell Palmer's red scare. He was known to dislike the Treaty

and had refused, because of this, to be nominated in absentia as Labour candidate for North Dublin during the Pact election. His arrival in Dublin showed a possibility that the Irish Labour Party and T.U.C. might take the lead in a new struggle for a socialist republic.

Larkin's tactical skill failed him. Already Labour's leaders had found excuses not to press for his release. This presaged his new, deeper disagreement with O'Brien and Johnson. He initiated a fight to expel the sitting executive of the I.T.G.W.U. But Larkin had thus to appeal to capitalist legalism; O'Brien had a better case there. In March 1924, with the court's blessing, the latter expelled him from the trade union that he had founded. This and other legal actions left Larkin bankrupt and ineligible for the Dail. The I.T.G.W.U. suppressed all mention of his name in its publications and used its power to keep isolated his newly-founded Workers' Union of Ireland. The latter revenged itself by winning over most of the unskilled workers in Dublin.

Congress and Party were allied closely enough for the breach in the Labour movement to be colossal. A small but distinct group developed around the W.U.I. Some of its members backed the Republicans. Others backed Larkin's own 'Irish Worker' League which absorbed the C.P.I.

But, by May 1923, the Civil War had ended and with it for a time the Irish Republic. In the process, the right had been united. The Left was, however, now divided into three portions: Republican, Labour and Larkinite.

For most people, Irish history is replaced, at this point, by mythology.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### COME IN A GALE: GO IN A STORM 1923-1932

*We cry because  
We hate you so  
You know!  
You very wicked peers! Don't go!*

W.S. Gilbert: *Iolanthe*, Act II

#### I

#### *Politics – home and abroad*

Sinn Fein's Treatyite wing did not organize itself as a political party until the Civil War was in its last months, by when hope of reuniting had been long abandoned. The new body took the name of Griffith's original foundation: 'Cumann na nGaedhael'. 'Sinn Fein' was adopted by Cumann na Poblachta which still pledged its loyalty to de Valera. He was styled 'President' of the 'Irish Republic' of which the 'Second Dail' was held by them still to be the de jure legislature.

In the general election of August 1923 Cumann na nGaedhael won 63 seats out of 153. Sinn Fein's 44 T.D.s revived the Hungarian policy on behalf of the 'Second Dail'. Thus, in practice, the former party had an overall majority.

It backed an Executive Council pledged to organize Irish society from above as it had restored the Irish central political authority.

The struggle for the latter had magnified the difficulties of the former. The Civil War had squandered a vast, albeit uncertain, sum of money. It had added a bitterness to the Saorstat's constitutional disagreements so that they could never be made up by Cumann na nGaedhael. Above all, it had postponed, and had thus made less tractable, the serious consideration of problems that

would have existed anyway.

First amongst these was the existence of Northern Ireland. This included what had been (in the 1911 census) nearly one-third of Ireland's population, one fifth of its area, 40% of its taxable capacity and the bulk of its industry.

This loss aggravated existing deficiencies in the Saorstat's economy. It lacked natural reserves of minerals and nonagricultural raw materials. Technical education was negligible outside the cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford. There was a similar dearth of efficient managers and effective merchants. The consumer price index was higher than in 1914 by more than twice as much as the agricultural price index. On top of all, many chose to act as if the Civil War was still being waged. In these circumstances, both capital and labour had strong incentives to quit the country. And, for several winters more, starvation would recur in areas of the west.

How such problems would have solutions attempted might be foreseen. The Treatyite party backed solidly by the elitist triple alliance of Church, Business and Bureaucracy: Altar, Till and Filing Cabinet. Admittedly, tensions existed between the three. The Catholic Church's influence was limited, at first, by the position of the Unionist firms that maintained the Anglo-Irish market. The expansion of the bureaucracy was countered by the spheres of Church and business. The latter was the least demanding of the groups, yet events would prove it had to maintain a certain, low, standard of efficiency, or be supplanted by the bureaucracy. But clashes were exceptional; unity was the rule, especially when faced with the demands of the democracy, as already in the soviets and trade unions, and now in local government.

Cumann na nGaedhael accepted this. Most of its Deputies were, in background and weltanschauungen, like their predecessors of the Republican Dails (if indeed, they were not themselves of those assemblies).

But Dail Eireann procedure ensured considerable powers to its Executive Council vis-à-vis the ordinary T.D. This strength was increased gradually. The one major power possessed by the Dail as a whole was its duty to refuse its dissolution at the request of a defeated Executive Council. And this was to be used in 1930 to restore to power such a government.

This body had as its President, one William Thomas Cosgrave, a little man, notable mainly for his Civil Service appointments. Before 1916 he had been, as a councillor on the Dublin Corporation, associated with the activities of his Labour colleagues. In the

Republican Dail he had been able to make a mark as Minister for Local Government. But neither he, nor his Minister for Defence, General Richard Mulcahy, had much clear idea of the sort of country they wished to establish beyond the Sinn Fein national bourgeois demands, at which they were to stop with dedicated obstinacy. The Minister for Finance, Ernest Blythe, could offer to transcend them only by a rather woolly Gaelic Co-operatism. And, though the Minister for Industry and Commerce, Joseph McGrath, had once been Larkin's private secretary, he had learnt little from the Socialists.

Opposed to the old Sinn Fein policy was Kevin Higgins (now O'Higgins), Vice-President of the Executive Council and Minister for Home Affairs from 1922. His background was orthodox national bourgeois. He was accordingly cynical about the overall efficacy of tariffs and fearful for their effects upon the existing Anglo-Irish trade. His prejudices were reinforced by the arguments of his friend, the Minister for Agriculture, Patrick Hogan. With Eoin MacNeill, Desmond Fitzgerald, the London Irishman, and, later, Patrick MacGilligan, they formed a group speaking for the policy to which the bourgeois alliance was bound to divert Cumann na nGaedhael.

As yet this division was less definite than a division running across it. This was between the civilians (including both Cosgrave and O'Higgins) and the soldiers (a term covering several groups whose leading figures were Mulcahy and McGrath).

The forces of the right were given even greater weight than they possessed already by the Saorstát Constitution. It established in the legislature (an t'Oireachtas) a second house (an Seanad) that included members of the old Unionist and United Ireland groups out of all proportion to their numbers in the community. In addition, the Dail restored to itself University representation, only with the University of Ireland being given equal representation to the University of Dublin.

But the crowning glory of the new order was His Majesty's Governor-General. And this post was given to T.M. Healy, perhaps the least progressive of all Parliamentary Nationalists, and the employers' advocate in the 1913 Lock-Out.

And yet Cumann na nGaedhael won an overall majority in the Dail without the Republicans. Indeed, even with the Republicans sitting, it could have held a majority of seats, as it did later, by reliance on such minor groupings as the old Unionists, the old Redmondites, the Businessmen and the Farmers' Party.

That this was so was due to various facts. New Cumann na



nGaedhael was considered to be as much the heir to Sinn Fein as that body was the heir to old Cumann na nGaedhael. The limited Sinn Fein economic policy possessed still its basic attraction as the elixer of economic freedom, to which was now added the prestige of the three years War of Independence. Socialism as a conscious policy had gone by default. For the moment Cumann na Gaedhael benefited.

More important was the fact that the side of the Treaty was the side of peace: that of the Republic, the side of war. The details of the Sinn Fein split did not influence many; they did see that the Republicans were rocking the boat. The failure of the new Sinn Fein to go beyond the constitutional issues encouraged this view.

The opponents of Cumann na nGaedhael suffered not only from its divisions but from these facts.

The Republicans did win forty-four seats in August 1923. But they would have won more but for their confusion on social issues, their militarist background and the threat to peace implicit in their maintenance of the Second Dail.

Until 1927 the only consistent and constitutional left-wing opposition to Cumann na nGaedhael was the Labour Party. It was led in the Dail by its Secretary, Thomas Johnson. In August 1923 it won only fourteen seats. It was handicapped by its quiescent background in the post-1916 national struggle, by the strength of Larkinism in Dublin City, by the existence of the Republican left and by its own refusal to contest more than forty-four seats.

In these circumstances Irish policy under Cosgrave was conservative at home as abroad. In the latter sphere it was circumscribed by the Treaty; in the former by the social framework accepted by bureaucrats, ranchers and businessman. Irish credit economy remained dependent upon that of Britain. Irish credit had to be backed by British credit. Irish currency remained a prettier form of British currency. Irish exporters supplied the British market. To these aims the Irish power elite was encouraged by various types of incentive given at the workers' expense, by the encouragement of foreign capitalists as examples and competitors, by agricultural aids benefiting, in the main, the ranchers, and, only when all else had failed, by a few faltering steps towards state-sponsored enterprise.

Against this, the opposition was naturally ineffective. Between 1922 and 1927 Labour's importance remained founded in its existence as a parliamentary opposition to an administration tempted, at times sorely, by the examples of foreign dictators. Its one finite

achievement was to force the Executive Council to promise never again to conclude important foreign agreements without the Dail's consent. Motions on social welfare, against the further weakening of Irish local government, and on other measures to defend the workers were voted down by the Oireachtas' conservative majority.

Yet between 1923 and 1927 the administration found much to achieve within its chosen limits. This was quite apart from such post-war reconstruction as the rebuilding of roads and railways. Dominion status enabled the rationalization of the civil service, police and judiciary, and the improvement of selection methods for the personnel of central and local Compulsory primary education was at last enforced and the Irish language became compulsory in schools. A small tariff system was developed. Post Office costs were reduced, inland fisheries improved and reafforestation timidly begun. Hogan went beyond the Republican Dails by ending the individual landlord and regulating the quality of agricultural produce. Above all, by 1928 there had been initiated three major public works schemes: the Carlow beet sugar factory (originated as a plan of the Republican Dails), the drainage of the River Barrow, and above all the Shannon electricity scheme that has enabled a cheap native supply of power to be transmitted throughout the sparse Irish population.

The same progress appeared in the formalities of foreign policy. Fulfilment of the Treaty was interpreted in a manner that strengthened Ireland's diplomatic position. O'Higgins and the Minister for External Affairs, Desmond Fitzgerald, took the lead in broadening the concept of dominion status. Ireland was the first Dominion to have its own foreign legation. Its representatives won kudos both at the League of Nations and at the Naval Armament Conference. It headed the struggle against the British Privy Council's authority over imperial law suits. Above all, O'Higgins led the Dominions in the attack that achieved the Balfour Declaration, later embodied in the Statute of Westminster. This was to clarify the Dominions' complete legislative independence of the U.K.

Even in their own limited sphere, such developments could not heal the Treaty settlement's sorest wound; the excision of the north-east. This gave the fulfilment policy its worst set-back. Hopes that Northern Ireland might prove uneconomic were dashed by Britain's readiness to make allowances for it. The policy of reducing its area below the economic minimum was similarly unsuccessful. Britain appointed to the Boundary Commission, as its representative, the South African Imperialistic judge, Ri-

chard Feetham, and as Northern Ireland's, the Orangeman, J.R. Fisher. The Saorstat appointed to it the scholarly Eoin MacNeill, who had few hopes of its success. Having declared against any Minority Report, MacNeill seems to have found himself presented by his fellow-Commissioners with a *fait accompli*. The proposed Majority Report recommended but minor frontier changes, of which some were transfers of territory to Northern Ireland. MacNeill resigned immediately from the Commission and shortly after from the Executive Council. The latter achieved a new compromise. The border remained as before (which gave the Unionists further documentary backing for their intransigence) and all debts between Britain and Ireland were cancelled, with three exceptions that would later prove important. Northern Ireland remained within the U.K. Its return seemed possible only by even more assiduous fulfilment of the Treaty. In fact, O'Higgins and his associates began seriously to consider sacrificing some independence in order to be reunited with Northern Ireland in a formal Anglo-Irish dual monarchy.

Despite the partition set-back, it can be said truly that, under Cosgrave, Saorstat Eireann initiated a period of nearly two decades in which it was arguably the best-governed state in Europe. But this appears less glorious when one considers the rivalry.

Cumann na nGaedhael's increasing loyalty to the Saorstat as an end in itself caused friction amongst supporters of a party of which many had accepted the Treaty only as a step to a Republic. As early as March 1924 a mutiny had occurred in the Army. Backed by Mulcahy, members of the Treatyite rump of the I.R.B. had occupied a number of commands. They had clashed with more Republican-inclined officers, centred on Collins' old Intelligence Service. These latter threatened to rebel if state policy did not satisfy them more. The Commissioner of Police ('Garda Siochana' or Guardians of the Peace), General Eoin O'Duffy was appointed to deal with the situation. However, Mulcahy acted against the mutineers without consultation, and, though successful, had to resign with his protégés. An Army Oaths Act was passed in the same year to crush all cliques including what little remained of the I.R.B.

From sympathy with the mutineers, MacGrath resigned at the same time as Mulcahy. He formed a 'National Group' with like minded Cumann na nGaedhael T.D.s mainly from Dublin city and small farm constituencies. In October 1924 most of them resigned their seats. In the subsequent bye-elections only one was a candidate and he was soundly defeated. Some of the Group drift-

ed back to Cumann na nGaedhael. Others moved further the other way.

The disappointing boundary agreement encouraged further disaffection. In January 1926 Professor William Magennis announced the founding of 'Clann Eireann' (The 'Irish People' – or 'People's Party') which included a Senator, Maurice Moore, and two other T.D.s sympathetic to the former National Group. This gained next year the adherence of the Republican T.D., Dan Breen, who took the oath to the King that he might introduce an abortive Bill to abolish it. Although Senator Moore's pamphlet against the British holding of land annuities encouraged a campaign based on economic fact, the new party's policy was purely constitutional. Thus all its candidates were defeated in the general election of June 1927. A party with a programme both more comprehensive and more Republican seemed to be more of a possible alternative government.

On November 14th 1925 the I.R.A. withdrew its allegiance from Sinn Fein and became a free agent to pursue its specific ideals. De Valera could no longer speak for all Republicans. Furthermore, without armed backing, Sinn Fein was left an ordinary political party self-willed to frustration. In two years its strength had declined from 1,500 branches to 303. In the local government elections of 1925 it had been defeated crushingly. The Local Appointments Act forced local employees to swear loyalty to the Saorstat. Such employers as John Good, T.D., discriminated similarly. Yet the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis of November 1925 reaffirmed abstentionism, and the party ignored appeals from Magennis and the Labour Party to enter the Saorstat Dail to vote against the Boundary Agreement.

But the passing of this stimulated a special Ard Fheis of Sinn Fein on March 11th 1926. Here de Valera proposed that the party enter the Dail if the oath were removed. A contradictory amendment was passed and he resigned from the party with his followers. Two months later, on May 16th, in the La Scala (now the Capitol) Theatre, Dublin, he founded a new party: 'Fianna Fail' (Soldiers of 'Fal' or 'Destiny': poetic for Ireland).

Between Sinn Fein and Fianna Fail the difference was purely constitutional. For Sinn Fein even an oathless Saorstat Dail usurped the authority of the 'True' Second Dail for all Ireland. The I.R.A. was, as yet, less dogmatic; its aim was to make the 32 County Republic a reality as soon as possible. As before, it represented the Republic of the poor, as against the middle class party politicians. However, its point of reference was still the Republic



of 1919 that it confused with that of 1916. Under these circumstances, it provided a broad front on the one hand for such Socialists as Michael Price, Peadar O'Donnell and the youngsters George Gilmore and Frank Ryan, and, on the other hand, Maurice Twomey, Sean Russell and young Sean MacBride. Similar, albeit less clearcut, divisions existed in the parties. Fianna Fail opposed the dying Countess, Constance Markievicz, and Sean MacEntee to de Valera, Sean T. O'Ceallaigh and Frank Aiken. Sinn Fein had on the left Fr Michael O'Flanagan and, on certain specifics, Mary MacSwiney (Terence's sister) and J. J. O'Kelly ('Sceilg'): on the right Art O'Connor (de Valera's 'Presidential' successor), Austin Stack and the propagandist, Brian O'Higgins. But the common denominator of Republican policy remained the spirit and economics of Griffith.

A small majority of abstentionist T.D.s supported Sinn Fein rather than Fianna Fail. The general election of June 1927 more than reversed this position. The results also left Cumann na nGaedhael without an overall majority even among sitting Deputies; it had to rule with support from the Independents and the Farmers' Party. Outside the Dail, Fianna Fail held only three seats less than the government. The Labour Party, sitting in Dail Eireann, had half as many as Fianna Fail. Between Labour and Cumann na nGaedheal was Captain William Redmond's small National League: an attempt to revive his father's party in a hostile world.

Cosgrave had worries within his party. Since 1923 Kevin O'Higgins' star had risen. A fine intellect, an incisive orator and a courageous politician, O'Higgins represented the beau ideal of Irish bourgeois politics. He was undoubtedly the most respected of all the Ministers; to many he was the personification of law and order; it had been he, not Cosgrave, that had prevented the Army feuds from getting out of hand in 1924. On the other hand, Republicans hated the defender of their sufferings; debtors, the supporter of the bailiffs; publicans, the man who had reduced drinking time. He and his allies formed a powerful group and one which believed sincerely that he was better suited than Cosgrave to hold the Presidency. After the June election, he obtained the portfolio of External Affairs in addition to that of Justice. Cosgrave counterbalanced desperately by bringing Mulcahy, his old opponent, back on to the Council as Minister for Local Government.

Then, on July 10th 1927, O'Higgins was murdered by what seems to have been a freelance group of Republicans. A new and draconian Public Safety Act was passed. In addition, Cosgrave



took the opportunity to strengthen his hold over his followers and against the growing Labour Party. Claiming that the crime had been encouraged by the political atmosphere created by abstention, he introduced a Bill by which no one could stand as a legal candidate to the Dail without promising to take the oath. Accordingly, de Valera and his party swore 'as an empty formula' and took their seats in the manner followed by Labour for the past five years.

Johnson prepared now to form a coalition with Redmond, backed by Fianna Fail. The policy of such a front would include the negotiated removal of the oath. The plan failed; Major Bryan Cooper, a government supporter caused the doubtful Redmondite, John Jinks, to be drunk and incapable of going to the Dail. The resultant tie was solved in favour of Cumann na nGaedhael, by the casting vote of the Ceann Comhairle (Chairman of the Dail), Michael Hayes. But Cosgrave's position remained insecure. Then two bye-elections returned his supporters. In September, he had the Dail dissolved for a second time that year and went to the country.

In this election Sinn Fein did not participate; most of its last remaining seats went to Fianna Fail. This party won other seats from Labour. Cumann na nGaedhael continued its existing practice of winning seats from the Farmers' Party. It gained also from the National League (although a sizeable minority of League votes went to Fianna Fail) and admitted several Independents to its ranks. In the gross result, it was still the government. But it retained dependence on the Farmers (of whom the leader, M.R. Heffernan, was placed in charge of the Post Office) and Independents. Fianna Fail was the only viable alternative.

To February 1932, party support continued to polarize. Against this tendency Labour tried in vain to establish itself as a possible administration. Outside the Oireachtas, from 1929, the 'anti-party', 'Comhairle na Poblachta', co-ordinated the Republicans. But their strategy, being military rather than political, mobilized more followers to Fianna Fail.

But the most important reason for the growth of such support was the overall change accomplished by the two main parties from their position of 1923.

On the Treaty settlement, the possibilities of fulfilment were being exhausted. Entry to the Council of the League of Nations (1930) and the Statute of Westminster (1931) represented two of the strongest possibilities of the status quo. On a third aim, that of the abolition of the British Privy Conciliar jurisdiction, there was

compromise. Yet Ministers defended the Treaty as an end in itself. Hogan waxed enthusiastic about the oath. Blythe stated that the Saorstat had 'more freedom' than a Republic. The Constitutional provisions for Initiative and Referendum were expunged when de Valera sought to use them to remove the oath. For all this there were two reasons. The first was the north-east. The second was the continuing dependence of Ireland's economy upon the British market. The first reason was vitiated by Craig (now Craigavon)'s continuing refusal to have anything to do with the Saorstat: the second, by the diminishing economic returns of imperial membership under the world slump.

Yet the administration's economic policy could be little changed, even as the slump deteriorated. Blythe's emergency budget of November 1931 left income tax lower than in Britain. Maintenance of the British market remained the overriding economic goal, even at the expense of possible new Irish enterprises. If anything, this tendency was increased in the last years of the Cosgrave government, after the high tariff Minister, J. J. Walsh, had been replaced by the I.F.U. leader, Heffernan. Hogan continued his policy's emphasis on livestock. The hungry unemployed man watched live beef leave the country, shod his feet (if at all) with boots made in Nottingham, and probably ate bread baked in a less agricultural state. The small farmer paid land annuities as insurance for a market in which he could not participate. Ministers argued that the Irish were better off than people elsewhere. Fianna Fail pointed out that much of this argument was based on incomplete statistics (notably in unemployment).

The complete subservience of Cumann na nGaedhael to the ethos of the Irish establishment was revealed in April 1930. The Executive Council showed itself ready to resign rather than accept a Fianna Fail-sponsored bill to extend old age pensions. And it did not offer any alternative other than vague hopes for the future.

Nor was the regime producing schemes like those with which it had been associated. The Shannon and Barrow enterprises were completed in 1929. Little was introduced to continue to inspire the people. The Vocational Education, Forestry and Tourist Acts were all important and beneficial, but not awe-inspiring. The Irish Sweepstake was a private member's scheme. And Dr Drumm's celebrated electrical battery came too late and was too complicated to be a help to Cumann na nGaedhael. In addition, Mulcahy's 'reforms' of the administrations of the cities of Dublin and Cork soon proved to be notable neither for democracy nor for efficiency.

In one sphere, ministerial activity was obvious. There was still constant and active opposition to the 'gun bullies' of extreme Republicanism. But here doubt was developing. The 1927 Public Safety Act was repealed partly because it was too extreme for operation. It was replaced by an act to protect juries against intimidation. Discontent swelled the ranks of the I.R.A., of Comhairle na Poblachta, and of the Comhairle's successor, Saor Eire. The first-named committed several murders and the Executive Council forced through the Oireachtas a constitutional amendment far in excess of the obvious need. A clerically-supported red scare stampeded two prominent Labour T.D.s into backing this act. Despite it, many felt sceptical about the move. Many who were charged and arrested during the scare were neither murderous thugs nor Russian agents but normal Irishmen; indeed one of them was the Editor of the new Fianna Fail newspaper.

Nor was there, as originally, the unquestioning respect for the Gardai. O'Higgins had been able to control the Commissioner, O'Duffy. The new Minister for Justice, James Fitzgerald-Kenny ('Cowboy Kenny' to Republicans) was less capable. Accounts appeared of police brutalities. On occasions, O'Duffy was found to have drawn up a warrant illegally and to have detained prisoners without charge.

Cumann na nGaedhael's admired toughness seemed to be developing into thuggishness. It gloried in such brutal necessities as the Public Safety Act of 1923, described approvingly as 'the Floggers' Act by the party's periodical *The Star*. This hinted, also, at an Army mutiny against a possible Republican administration. Dr Thomas O'Higgins (Kevin's elder brother) proclaimed pride in Cumann na nGaedhael's 'hanging, jailing or flogging'. In the general election campaign of February 1932 the party's orators seemed to regard peace in the manner attributed to the Romans by Tacitus' Caledonians.

And yet, while the country had its hair raised by the red terror, the Garda Siochana had its morale reduced by a pay cut.

None of this could maintain the government as the protector of the peace. Many began to feel that either it was dishonest in its protests, or that it had been inefficient in keeping order in the past, or that, possibly, Fianna Fail's way of ending agitation might be better.

Other minor details jarred on the Irish. Why couldn't Ministers and higher civil servants have pay cuts? Had the Treaty to be interpreted to pay the Governor-General such a large sum (including such allowances as a grand piano)? Was it really necessary

for Ministers to dress, like Unionists, in top-hats and morning coats?

In its general election campaign in February 1932 Fianna Fail offered proposals to the future such as seemed to answer the feelings of many Irishmen. Cumann na nGaedhael's addresses interspersed praise for its record with abuse of its opponents. For a slight but definite majority of the Irish, the latter was just not good enough.

## II

### *The Divisions of the Peasantry*

Between 1910 and 1923 the clearest change on the Irish agricultural scene occurred amongst the co-operatives. In 1910, their mentors had given the impression that they were potential forces for revolutionary change. By 1923, they could be seen to be mere agents of one sector of the farming community. This was of course no more than the logic of their position. Being limited mainly to dairy farmers, they could not exceed the ideals dictated by this class's economic base. Æ was thus a voice crying in the wilderness though not so far therein that his co-operation could deal logically with the property question.

The Irish Farmers Union instituted an alliance between large and medium farmers against the landless. Farmers' boycotts weakened the dairy soviets. And they did so with the blessing of the ideologists of the I.A.O.S.

After 1920 ideological retreat was paralleled by physical decline. In the War of Independence, British forces burnt many co-operative creameries. Partition necessitated the separate development of an 'Ulster' A.O.S. By 1922 Plunkett described his movement as being 'financially embarrassed to a degree threatening its very existence'.

So the government stepped in. By their actions as strike and soviet-breakers their leaders had killed Catholic bourgeois mistrust of them. The Saorstat Minister for Agriculture, Patrick Hogan, rewarded them by increasing the I.A.O.S. grant. From 1923 it has existed as a purely economic body accepting with equanimity a capitalist economy that stultifies its existence.

Agricultural capitalism was also furthered by Hogan's first



Land Act in 1923. This was an advance on the timid schemes of the Republican Dails (albeit not on those of contemporary Republicans). It transferred finally (subject to compensation) all remaining tenanted agricultural land from landlords to Land Commission, through which the tenants would buy it on easy terms land annuities. By the Land Commission Act of the same year, the Department of Agriculture took over the powers of the Congested Districts Board. Further Land Acts extended the Commission's authority to cover sub-tenants on purchased lands until which the 1931 Act all tenants and sub-tenants held their lands from it directly.

The legislation fostered the separateness of the farmer, however small, from the landless agricultural labourer, whose only legal hope for independent land-holding was in the conacre or eleven-month lease system.

Neither labourers nor smallest farmers felt this separateness as yet. In the small farm areas there was lack of conspicuous difference between farmer and labourer. Many small farmers had to eke out their livings by road work or remittances from emigrant relatives. Eight out of ten labourers were themselves close relatives of small farmers. And, in any case, farm labourers in the west were fewer than farmers and declined further relatively after 1930.

And the small farmer tended to distrust his larger equivalent far more than he did the landless man. Despite its efforts, the I.F.U. gained little support west of the Shannon. In part, this was due to the countrymen's general mistrust of men who lived by money: gombeen men, professional men or ranchers.

Maintaining this alienation was the policy of Hogan, Minister for Agriculture from 1922 to 1932 and for the new Department of Lands from 1924 to 1928. He understood that exports were important to Ireland and that, by the Saorstat's nature, its exports must be mainly agricultural. So his aim was simple. It was to reduce the farmers' production costs.

This was helped by such achievements as the Shannon power station, the drainage of the River Barrow, and the beet sugar factories. More direct aid was the control and subsidization (to a sum doubled between 1922 and 1928) of many agricultural products. They included eggs, dairy products, livestock, meat and potatoes. The inadequacy of orthodox banking and the failure of co-operative credit societies led to the establishment in 1927 of an Agricultural Credit Corporation. University Schools were established in Agriculture and Dairy Sciences.

All this was no more than a holding operation. After a brief



rally in 1924, agricultural prices declined steadily and more swiftly than corresponding consumer prices throughout this period.

And the schemes had less success for the smaller farmers than for the large and medium ones. The smallholders produced mainly milk, poultry, pigs and cereals. Only the first two were subsidized significantly. Pigs were the chief small farm export. They were ignored until, after 1931, the Northern Ireland farmers were able to produce them more than competitively.

Yet this was not all. Even where small farmers were ready to participate in improvement schemes, they had not the capital resources so to do. The security of co-operation existed rarely. The A.C.C. was too centralized and its loans too dependent on land security.

But most important was the situation in the actual market sphere. Among home distributors there was general prejudice against Irish goods. The story is told of a merchant who for apples described as 'Canadian' offered four times the price he had offered for the same apples admitted to be Irish. Thus the export market's significance was enhanced. But the only European state that still carried out a free trade policy was Britain and, despite efforts in Europe and in the Empire Marketing Board, exports increased far more quickly across the Irish Sea than elsewhere. This tendency was emphasized by the excessive charges demanded by both rail and marine carriers. Thus Irish external trade became increasingly dependent upon Britain in a manner that favoured the larger farmers.

In 1928 Finian Lynch, Minister for Fisheries from 1922, took over the Department of Lands and a newly-established Department of the Gaeltacht. The re-organization was aimed specially to help the small farmer. The new body did in fact subsidize house-building and school meals in Gaeltacht areas and initiated some tweed spinning schemes. These merely scratched the surface of the problems. Similarly though inland fishery development was reorganized, nothing effective was done to improve Ireland's deteriorated sea fishing. Hogan's forestry policy was the defensive one of preventing uneconomic tree-cutting. Starvation haunted the west.

Meanwhile, the small farmer's powers were weakened by the abolition of the Rural District Councils and by the increased powers of such administrative officials as Land Commissioners and quality inspectors.

The farm labourer was even worse off. His organizations were crushed by 1924. By 1934 his weekly wage had fallen from 26/3d to 21/-. He received no unemployment benefit. He could not

vote in local elections. So his numbers declined steadily but gradually.

On the other hand, the medium farmer could oppose the governmental powers through the I.A.O.S. and the I.F.U.

The large farmer also had the I.F.U. and the county agricultural bodies. Even without them, he was powerful enough to force the bureaucracy to compromise.

What activated the small farmer opposition to the administration was the discovery that his land annuity and most of its arrears had still to be paid into the British Exchequer. This was for no apparent reason other than the Land Act of 1923 ratified by a non-statutory agreement in 1926. (In fact there was a similar earlier and secret agreement in this subject.)

This was publicized by Senator Moore, of Clann Eireann. It was taken up by Peadar O'Donnell, the Socialist I.R.A. leader. At first his campaign was limited to the north-west of Co. Donegal. It nearly collapsed, then revived under pressure from similar conditions.

O'Donnell tried to interest the Labour Party in ending the annuities. The party's leader, Johnson, was cynical. His successor, O'Connell, feared a red scare. But individual Party members did support such a scheme.

But the movement was organized by O'Donnell's Comhairle na Poblachta and backed by Fianna Fail (officially) on the single issue of whether the annuities would be paid. Cumann na nGaedhael could show, to oppose retention, only six lawyers: Fianna Fail produced seven. It varied its programme with vague promises to use the annuities to lower rural rates and subsidize the small farmers' cereals.

In April 1930 a Working Farmers' Conference met in Galway. It was composed of delegates from Cos. Clare, Galway, Leitrim, Limerick, Longford, Roscommon and Donegal. It passed motions denouncing annuities and associating with the contemporary European movements of their kind and with what was to become Saor Eire.

This developed without central organization. It was encouraged by the World Depression. In 1931, the administration banned it as Communist; its contributory conditions could not be so easily swept away. These now became important justifications for the return to power of Fianna Fail.

### III

#### *The workers and their movements*

The years of warfare, abroad and home, did represent material progress for the Irish worker. Between 1914 and 1918 he gained parity of wages with his British counterpart. By the Acts of 1911 and 1920 unemployment, though considerable, was covered at the British rate of benefit, for all but agricultural labourers. Irish trade unions enrolled many new working-class interests.

At the same time growth of trade union membership went with growth of trade union organization. The leadership was isolated increasingly from the rank and file. This was most notable in the I.T.G.W.U.'s whose constitution was redrawn to that effect.

Organization reinforced ideology. The rigour of the Labour leaders' Syndicalism was justified by the existence of trade union bureaucracy and its need for secure conditions. Elaborate organization wanted to believe that the situation was unripe for Irish Socialism, or even Labour government, for fear of the unrest that would be caused by attempts to achieve such. Accordingly Larkin's struggle against William O'Brien received little support from other union leaders. They tended naturally to prefer piecemeal action against capitalism to all-out attack on it.

The instincts of union members were wiser. They would be the immediate victims of the mounting capitalist offensive. Most of the I.T.G.W.U.'s non-Dublin membership had been organized by O'Brien and, of it, builders and road-menders depended by the nature of their work upon the existence of an established union. In Dublin, however, the unskilled workers were more concentrated and could afford to opt for their original leader. Two-thirds of the I.T.G.W.U.'s membership formed the core of the W.U.I. Such dissentient Labour candidates as P. T. Daly used Larkin's name to split the Labour vote in the 1923 general election. The Party's Dublin organization went into suspended animation for most of the next twenty years. O'Brien himself fought future Dail elections in Co. Tipperary and failed to retain his seat on the Dublin Corporation.

Despite these setbacks, the movement's leaders continued in their chosen syndicalism. Though in 1918 their organization's title was changed from 'Congress and Party' to 'Party and Congress' the practical emphasis remained as before. When it started to fight general elections, the Party never put up sufficient candi-

dates to form an alternative administration. Such political casualness, added to trade union division and bureaucracy, could not provide a focal point for resistance to reaction.

Such resistance was needed. The civil war saw new attacks on the workers. These were continued after 1923 in the name of increased employment. That the Irish labourers on the Shannon scheme were not paid starvation wages (32/- per week at time of high inflation) was ensured only by general strike and boycott of the area. The policy of the Executive Council itself was little better. The social welfare services (most notably the old age pensions) were cut down and an attempt was made to end rent control entirely. In the name of economy, a number of local councils (admittedly, after four troubled years of sitting, not in the best of shape) were swept away and replaced by appointed Commissioners. These sacrificed everything to reduce the rates (and left the City of Dublin with an almost doubled public debt). Later the restored Dublin City Corporation was given a franchise loaded to favour business. Johnson's Allotment and Common Pasture Bill was sabotaged.

On the other hand, the administration gave the workers cheap electricity from the Shannon scheme, certain inadequate (albeit, at the time, impressive) housing schemes, and some minor measures of price and food quality control. Most important was the fact that it did reduce unemployment until 1930, though how far this was due to its necessary public works and reconstruction schemes, and how far to emigration wage reduction and the European boom is another matter. Also, from 1925, retail prices declined slightly on the whole. Government schemes for total rent control were eventually shelved. Finally, its attempts to solve the worsening economic situation after 1930 were more than its right-wing followers could approve.

Against aggressive capitalism, the official Labour image was one of futility. The Trade Union Congress appeared most interested in isolating Larkin. Between 1923 and 1929, the numbers of Irish trade unionists declined from 130,000 to 85,000, most of the decline being felt by the I.T.G.W.U. This union showed signs of arrogance. In 1929 it tried to sabotage the reconstituted Dublin Trade Union Council because P. T. Daly was its secretary. The same year its President, Thomas Foran, left the Seanad Labour Party because his union's Seanad candidate had been defeated.

In the Oireachtas until 1927, the Labour Party prevailed everywhere but in the division lobbies. Thomas Johnson showed outstanding intellectual qualities, backed by the industrious research

of the Assistant Secretary, R. J. P. Mortished. But Cumann na nGaedhael with other anti-Labour forces possessed an overall majority. The Labour Party had to seek alliances on specific issues. Such Independent T.D.'s as Darrel Figgis, Myles Keogh and Alfred Byrne did support aspects of Labour's welfare policy. Captain Redmond spoke for town tenants. The Farmers' Party opposed the whittling away of local government. The businessman, John Good, advocated better education. None of this was effective. Self-condemned to being a minority party, Labour became ready to compromise on all other principles. Revolutionary Socialism was silently dropped and Johnson began to consider the coalition with Redmond. As a final example of weakness, Labour was fissile. Of its seventeen T.D.s elected in 1922, three were independent by August 1923. Of the fourteen elected then, one was independent by June 1927. Of the thirteen elected in September 1927, four fought the election of 1932 as Independents.

The weakness of orthodox Labour was marked by both Larkinites and Republicans. Of these, Larkin was too bound to Dublin; his politics too radical for most, even, of his industrial followers. His ally, Daly, returned to the Labour Party. The 'Irish Worker' League not only included the Communists but Larkin himself was, at this time, a leader of the Comintern. In the general election of September 1927 the I.W.L. contested the three Dublin seats. Larkin, its only victor, was promptly disqualified as being a bankrupt. The one permanent achievement of that campaign was that of his son, and namesake, who split Johnson's vote and caused his defeat.

Most Larkinite second preferences went to Fianna Fail. This appealed to disgruntled workers as representing the vague Republican-social ethos as against Labour's over-extreme appearance. Also it put up enough candidates to make it a credible opposition. It gained thirteen seats in the general election of September 1927. Eight of these came from Labour.

Between 1927 and 1932, this situation was accentuated. Johnson's successor was Thomas J. O'Connell, Secretary to the Irish National Teachers' Organization. He had achieved a supreme feat in affiliating this body to Party and Congress. What was more, at the beginning of his parliamentary career, he had advocated lay control of education. Five years of accepted minority status, had acted to soften this radicalism. He refused to support the anti-Annuity Campaign. Until then, Labour had enjoyed among the small farmers at least as much (and usually more) support as in Dublin City. Now all this disappeared. Meanwhile Fianna Fail gained



votes from town workers and unemployed by promises of increased social benefits and employment. It also gained the national teacher vote whose holders were disgruntled by Labour's apparent failure to defend their benefits. When Fianna Fail won in 1932, the Labour Party was reduced to seven seats, which did not include its leaders.

On the other hand, as the slump in Ireland worsened, and, from 1931, as it was magnified by the closing of American emigration opportunities, trade union membership rose. This dichotomy was formalized in 1930 when Congress and Party were separated. This was partly to enable the latter to seek support from among the intelligentsia: partly to admit, reluctantly, that trade unionists need not vote Labour. Above all, it was the funeral of Irish Syndicalism.

But Fianna Fail would not have expanded without the extra-parliamentary agitation of the group centred on the newspaper, *An Phoblacht*. This started in June 1925 as the organ of all abstentionist Republicans; it preached, then, the confused populist social programme common to all the movement. This changed in April 1926 when Peadar O'Donnell became editor; he began campaigns against land annuities and against Capitalism in its various forms. *An Phoblacht* angered both Sinn Fein and Fianna Fail and became a purely I.R.A. periodical. In December 1929 it set up a new body, Comhairle na Poblachta ('the Republican Council'), to express it as a political force. This was broadened in October 1931 to include Fianna Fail and Labour supporters in Saor Eire ('Free Ireland') soon banned under constitutional amendment. The *Phoblacht* movement was not Communist: its ideals had more in common with those of its contemporary central European peasant-worker movements to whose conferences it sent delegates. But it was on moderately friendly terms with the I.W.L. and encouraged its transformation into more aggressive and less centralized Workers' Revolutionary Groups. It was, in fact, an anti-parliamentary precursor of Popular Front (or Republican Congress)-ism. Its support for Fianna Fail in 1932 added to the fears entertained for that body by the respectable.

*Bourgeoisie and Gentry*

Cosgrave's successive Ministers for Industry and Commerce, Joseph McGrath (1922-1924) and Patrick MacGilligan (1924-1932), and his Minister for Finance (1923-32), Ernest Blythe, were agreed in their social conservatism. All based their policies on a readiness to work the existing social mechanism and to use its motivations. By encouraging the prosperity of capitalists (and by Hogan's encouraging the prosperity of ranchers) it was hoped that any of the wealth left over would trickle down to benefit the poor.

Such an attitude was natural for a party that had inherited the principles of Griffith, the policies of the Republican Dails, and the backing of Church, bourgeoisie (both Unionist and National) and bureaucracy.

Different (and usually cruder) variants of this viewpoint appeared as the policies of certain groups allied usually to the Executive Council against the Labour Party and associated increasingly with Cumann na nGaedhael against the Republicans. Such included the old Unionists, the Business Group, the National League (from 1926) and the Farmers' Party. The first faction was not homogeneous. Members representing the Protestant small farmers of the border counties and West Cork voted occasionally for increased welfare benefits. The Trinity Deputies (and the ex-Unionist Senators) tended to vote against open breach of the Rule of Law. Major Bryan Cooper, representative of the Co. Dublin bourgeois Protestants, expressed unashamedly the reactionary desires of the bourgeoisie. In this he concurred with the Business Group. It was composed of varying numbers of large Businessmen Independents and preached a naked *laissez-faire* and purely economic doctrine leavened, only, in John Good's case, by a readiness to invest more money in education. The National League was founded in September 1926 by Captain William Archer Redmond (son of John) who became its leader. It tried to revive the Hibernian ideal for the changed circumstances of bourgeois independence, but in practice made direct appeals to such varied interests as town tenants and publicans. After a small success in the general election of June 1927, it broke up so as to benefit mainly Cumann na nGaedhael. In February 1932 Redmond himself joined that Party.

Most significant of all right wing groups then in Dail Eireann was the Farmers' Party. From 1923 to 1926, it held one more seat than Labour, yet it could not establish itself as the main opposition. This was due to its complete subordination to the I.F.U. which was reflected in lack of interest in any viewpoint other than that of the large farmers and in schizophrenia over tariffs. Most representative of its defects was its somewhat oafish leader, Denis Gorey, who rarely attempted to offer leadership on non-farming issues and who was, in any case, convinced from 1925 that his party would have to enter Cumann na nGaedhael. In April 1927 an I.F.U. conference rejected his proposals to that effect and he left the party for the government benches. His two successors, Michael Doyle and Patrick Baxter, failed to reinvigorate the party. In September 1927 its fourth leader, M. R. Heffernan, accepted undersecretaryship to the Department of Finance, with control of Posts and Telegraphs. The Farmers' Party declined apace with its parent body, the Irish Farmers' Union. In 1932, Heffernan and two others of the six sitting Farmer T.D.s fought as Cumann na nGaedhael candidates; the other three fought, practically, as Independents. Collapse was emphasized when the three Farmer T.D.s elected in 1932 were unable to unite for or against de Valera.

Outside Dail Eireann the administration was supported by the Seanad majority, by the I.F.U. (albeit this declined after it had crushed the labourers' organizations) and the I.A.O.S. and by all daily newspapers until September 1931. It was backed similarly by *Æ*, whose political nerve had been shattered by the spectacle of co-operation soviet-style: his *Irish Statesmen* represented to its death in April 1930 the liberal, cultured element amongst the propertied. Until 1927 Moran's *Leader* also supported the Executive Council, but it cooled due to the latter's reluctant tariff policy.

All such applauded most of Cumann na nGaedhael's economic policy. After 1927, income tax was extracted at less than the British rate; a proposal by Thomas Johnson to impose a double rate on foreign investment was rejected. Also rejected were Labour proposals to implement the 1910 Committee's advice to nationalize railways and National League proposals to buy out town landlords (a last flicker of the original, radical, U.I.L.). Local government 'reforms' were in favour of economy at the expense of democracy. In 1931 a subsidy was given to tide big farmers over the slump.

There were more positive aids to the capitalist economy. The Trade Loans (Guarantee) Acts were renewed annually after 1924 and overruled the banks to enable the Department of Industry

and Commerce to make loans to guarantee employment or to reduce prices. There was also the Shannon scheme and the shrewd bargaining of John Dulanty, the Saorstat's Trade Commissioner (High Commissioner from 1930) in London. To 1929 this policy succeeded. It could not defeat world depression however. Nor could it cause any immediate beneficial change in the Irish social order.

This was due to the nature of the Irish bourgeoisie and gentry in its respective parts.

The large Anglo-Irish trading firms and the ranchers had succeeded when the economy was geared completely to the British market. They were not disposed to alter existing trade patterns by state action or by their own efforts. They were supported by the big Dublin Catholic businessmen, headed by Murphy's son at the *Irish Independent*. Since the rancher-bourgeois complex continued to dominate the Irish export trade, the Executive Council avoided offending it. Even after the murder of O'Higgins, the economics of his allies, Hogan and MacGilligan, were predominant.

But Anglo-Irish interests would have been less important had any great enterprise been shown among the small businessmen. A typical example of the type was exposed by a Fiscal Commission in 1924. A prominent witness there was a clay-pipe manufacturer who not only imported his clay, when aware of an adequate Irish supply thereof, but who imported it in a roundabout way. In the first three years of the industrial loans scheme, only a third of the money earmarked for it was spent. The Executive Council's encouragement of foreign entrepreneurs in such schemes as the Carlow sugar beet factory and Ford's motor assembly plant in Cork was justified by the absence of Irish entrepreneurs. No attempt was made to reverse the sales of Irish ships to British firms. Marketing techniques remained undeveloped. No large slaughtering trade grew up. By 1932 the bulk of leather goods bought in Ireland were still imported.

Exceptions to the general conservatism appeared amongst the manufacturers (mainly of textiles) and certain of provincial businessmen (especially in Cork). They wanted a more active tariff policy from the government. In this, they were at one with the small farmers. In 1926 the leaders of these groups in Cumann na nGaedhael, J. J. Walsh, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs and William Sears, the party Chairman, forced the establishment of a Tariff Commission to examine claims for tariffs and to recommend where such tariffs be raised. The results were not significant. Whereas between 1922 and 1926 ten duties had been im-



posed, between 1926 and 1932 only fifteen trades applied to the Commission for tariffs and twelve applications (mainly as regards textiles) were accepted. Of the rejected demands, the most notable was that for protection of wheat, opposed by the millers. It seems true that the most definite demands for protection after 1926 came from the urban workers (fearing unemployment) and the tillage (mainly small) farmers.

Irish capitalism's weakness was exacerbated by Irish banking. Much of Ireland's money was held by commercial banks, of which all but one were cross-border institutions, one a London clearing bank. Profits had been declining from 1910 and, with profits, initiative. Both commercial and P.O. savings banks held most of their assets (56% in 1927) in the United Kingdom, losing them from the Saorstat. But less money was lost than might have been because most Irish deposits bore interest, though this was rarely invested in Ireland. The depositor classes included large and medium farmers and all bourgeoisie. If small, they kept their money accumulating in their deposits, especially if they had been wounded in the immediate post-war land boom. The large depositors, and the banks themselves, tended to keep money invested abroad to the amount of some £150 – £200,000,000, representing estimated fractions of the national capital resources varying from 1/5 to 5/7ths. Such action was reasonable; the big investors had traded abroad, they got a better return for their money there than at home and they had the monetary links there for years. The stock exchange looked to the British share market instead of starting an Irish one. Such links were jealously guarded. The banks refused to help the administration's trade loans scheme. Cosgrave's head of the Department of Works, Seamus Bourke, could only get 5% of his proposed drainage schemes backed by the banks, although 50% thereof would be met by the local councils involved. Yet even the 1927 Currency Act allowed Irish currency to remain a prettier form of the British reality. Defenders of the system pointed out that Irish banking was the most solvent in the world. Many, including most Republicans, were doubtful whether such classic capitalist criteria were valid for a country such as Ireland. Their doubts still have relevance.

Another handicap to orthodox capitalist expansion was the civil service. This was the most obvious point of dissension between big and small business. The former objected to its powers. The latter relied upon it both as a shield against the demands of big business and labour and as a possible employer of its children. The latter was enabled to have its way in this for two reasons. The big bour-



geoisie could not replace state bureaucracy in any way generally acceptable to labour or farmers. And, in the last resort, such reforms as the imposition of local commissioners at once strengthened the bureaucracy and reduced the property-owners' rates.

The national necessity for a large civil service within Irish capitalism was shown in 1927. MacGilligan despaired of the inadequate private distribution of the hydro-electricity produced by the Shannon scheme. He organized a state-sponsored monopoly company, the Electricity Supply Board, despite protests from Deputy Good and the *Irish Independent*. Similarly, in the same year, Hogan set up the Agricultural Credit Corporation to by-pass the banking system. However, neither was prepared to consider analytically the Irish economy outside the special spheres in which they were immediately interested.

By now Fianna Fail was a possible alternative to Cumann na nGaedhael. Many small manufacturers preferred the former's promises of 'as much protection as possible' to the comparative moderation of the Tariff Commission. So did many large provincial capitalists.

In 1930 the World depression made its impact in Ireland. The next year, the Executive Council gained powers to impose tariffs (not import quotas) for limited periods. But Walsh had retired from politics in September 1927; Sears had died in 1929; Cumann na nGaedhael was clearly a low tariff party.

It must be emphasized that it seems to have retained the loyalty of most capitalists, great and small, at this time. Its appeal was most reduced for the workers and especially the small farmers.

But there was also some unrest amongst the bigger farmers. As early as December 1923, the *Irish Statesman* prophesied that the I.F.U. would crumple for lack of policy. In practice, under the Saorstat, it followed Hogan. Other bodies appeared to promise more. Fianna Fail offered a subsidy to grow wheat and tariffs on imported cereals (such as the Tariff Commission had rejected). From 1931 its ally, the Farmers' Protection Association, denounced annuities, free trade and high rural rates. Most important was the fact that the Country Agricultural Leagues composing the I.F.U. remained. They were reorganized in 1930 to agitate for rural de-rating backed by mild banking control by Patrick Belton, a maverick Republican, once in Fianna Fail but since a bitter enemy thereof. His Leagues did not welcome Fianna Fail's victory in 1932. But, by their existence, and their division of the big farmers' movement they prepared for its working of a policy that would not benefit their members.

## *The bureaucracy*

The formation of the state bureaucracy is accounted generally as being W. T. Cosgrave's finest achievement. As Minister for Finance in his first year of power, he prepared the plans for fusing the embryo Republican administration and the established Union civil service. The result lasted until 1959 and still provides the base from which the modern economic development bureaucracy is expanding.

Cosgrave's creation was much as the Parliamentary Nationalists had envisaged for a Home Rule Parliament. It was a departmentalized civil service of the British design, with control of appointments in the Department of Finance.

This (and the adoption of the Irish language as a means of entry) was merely the formality of the final triumph of the Irish nationalist bourgeoisie. Most of the new top Secretaryships were given to men whose civil service experience had not obscured their Nationalist loyalties, whilst most of the old Unionists sought jobs in the British bureaucracy. The civil service became completely open to the talents. There was enough of it to cater for the talents of most. Irish education, traditionally geared to stimulate literary intellect, found an alternative outlet to the Church, and to its pupils one more pleasant and promising than business. Accordingly, the bourgeois hegemony now dominated the state bureaucracy. The weight of the Irish establishment became urban, Catholic and bureaucratic. It is significant that, in certain respects, the policy of the Cosgrave administration was to the right of that which might have been followed by a liberal Unionist or Liberal regime.

But the ending of hegemonic conflict between capitalist and bureaucrat did not mean the end of the bureaucratic class or the end of conflict. If the state bureaucracy had taken over the national bourgeois mores, it could not take over its caste interests. The state bureaucracy was closer to the bourgeoisie than to the worker or to the small farmer but was itself an interest distinguished from others by its methods of organization and by such forms thereof as the means of mobility within it. It was able to preserve most of its pre-war powers untouched. The Nationalists had hoped for a local system of police forces. The civil disturbances surrounding independence were agreed generally to have made this impossible.

Control by the Dail was less than in Britain. No Committee of

Estimates existed in the Saorstat. The Committee of Public Accounts had eventually to renounce detailed control of virements.

More worrying to business was the further extension of bureaucratic powers in its own sphere. In 1927 the new Radio Eireann was placed under direct civil service control. The same year found three major bodies of a new kind: the Electricity Supply Board, the Agricultural Credit Corporation and the Dairy Disposal Company, set up to take over and run private creameries. These were associated with, staffed by, and yet not within the civil service. The bourgeoisie protested yet could offer nothing in their place.

And business supported the tightening of bureaucratic control around local authorities. Bourgeois Nationalism, having taken all it could from them, was terrified of Labour councillors following its example to benefit their class. In 1921, George Lansbury went to prison for paying the unemployed out of the rates. To prevent this in Ireland, certain councils were replaced by commissioners and the rural districts were abolished. From 1926, local appointments were made by centrally-appointed commissioners. Thus an already centralized organization was centralized still more. From this resulted a development of the T.D.s essentially supplicatory duties. Above all, the conservative pressures were reinforced at local level.

## VI

### *The Catholic Church*

In the first instance, dominion status clarified the respective positions of altar and filing cabinet so as to benefit the latter. As dynamic forces within such bureaux as the Congested Districts Board and the Department of National Education, the priests were ended. The civil service became secular again.

But bourgeois and bureaucrat concurred, in part positively, in part negatively, in confirming and indeed strengthening the Church's authority in certain special areas. For Ireland's lay rulers, the priesthood has always been a necessary, if uncertain, agent in weakening antipathetic reaction to their policies. Without it, they might have to rethink their attitude to democracy.

Thus it was not suggested that denominational education be abandoned. Impulse for maintenance was stimulated by the fact

that in 1923 the Northern Ireland Government endeavoured to enforce the original national system of non-denominationalism. What was more, it amended this later to allow for Protestant bible instruction. Once again secularism was equatable with Protestantism and such newspapers as the *Irish Independent* took care that the equation was made.

In primary education, the great achievement was the School Attendance Act (1926) which was aimed to enforce compulsory primary schooling. It was drawn up under Eoin MacNeill, the Minister for Education (1922-1925). He was a reluctant convert to the compulsion principle, whose act provided as little as was consistent with its permanence. It left the statutory school-leaving age at fourteen (though the Minister might raise it to sixteen) and avoided dealing with the existing denominational framework. The system was praised by Pope Pius XI in the encyclical *Rappresentanti in Terra* (1929), but, of its weaknesses, only the voluntarism was ended. In addition, of all Pearse's principles, the organizers of the system preferred to concentrate on a narrow variant of his Nationalism, rather than his organizational theories.

MacNeill did good work in a number of other fields. He subsidized private secondary schools on a capitation, rather than an examination, basis. In the advice of a committee of the first (Republican) Dail he reformed the teaching methods for the intermediate examinations, ending nationally set text books for language instructions. This was the one wholly beneficial genuflection to Pearse's shade.

But MacNeill's most determined policy was in the teaching of the language. Schools were graded according to their ability in this. Irish was used as a medium of teaching the younger children. The curriculum time for other subjects was reduced in its interest. Unfortunately this attack on the children was not accompanied by anything remotely comparable for their parents.

MacNeill's policy in post-primary education did not include drastic steps to extend every child's chances of it. To do so was the achievement of his successor, Professor John Marcus O'Sullivan, Minister for Education, 1926-1932. In 1930 his Vocational Education Act expanded the system of the old D.A.T.I. into a national system of vocational schools to be set up and administered under the direction of lay committees of the County Councils. O'Sullivan may have intended something more radical; certainly he provided for these schools' curricula to be extended to cover all academic (as well as technical) subjects. As it was, however, the Vocational Education Committees had to concern them-

selves with enough clerical mistrust of their immediate aims, to be wary of expanding them.

The Priest's role as guide to the children was equalled in his unofficial local lay authority. This was augmented by the government's abolition of the R.D.C.s.

But MacNeill's most determined policy was in the teaching of the Church's moral power. This was done despite some protest from the old Protestant Unionists. Divorce was made impossible in 1925. In 1923 was set up a Film Censorship Board that reflected in its actions the Catholic view. O'Higgins opposed the ultimate conclusion of all this. It was only in 1929, after a considerable alarm about imported pornography, that State Censorship of Publications was set up; it went rather farther than its original proposers had advocated. All these innovations were soon accepted by the upper classes as necessary for keeping their material benefits. After all, they could obtain banned books under plain cover from Britain; few of them went to the cinema; since the British Lord Chamberlain, there has been no theatre censorship; the obvious example of rural censorship, the clerical smashing of the popular country dances, did not affect bourgeoisie or gentry.

As clerical authority expanded over morality and culture, so did episcopal authority over the priesthood. In 1925, the case of O'Callaghan v O'Sullivan (the 'Kerry Case') recognized the right of a Bishop to deprive a priest of his parish subject to canon law. Two years later, the system by which Bishops were elected by all the diocesan clergy ('Recommendation') was replaced by that of the compilation of secret lists of the choices of all the other provincial Bishops.

Yet increase in episcopal power was not apparent in politics. The Catholic Church had to share class power with business and bureaucracy; none of them were yet ready to try for sole position. In any case, Irish clerical political strength had depended on three things: a divided opposition, a lack of secular ideology and, above all, an absence of direct clerical opposition to any well-defined popular material cause (such as, at this time, the payment of land annuities to the U.K.). In 1923 all these factors existed; in 1932, there was only the second. In the latter year, the general election results differ from those of the earliest contest.

But lack of any strong non-denominational Irish political tradition has given the Church an immense power in political matters not immediately relevant to living standards. Cumann na nGaedhael could not escape its influence. The Republicans were less affected only in degree. Fr Michael O'Flanagan was a promi-



ment leader of the left-wing both of Sinn Fein and of the I.R.A.; but his representative position as a churchman cannot be sustained. As to Fianna Fail, it had been Eamon de Valera who had rejected, when the First Dail needed allies, an offer of friendship from the new Russian Soviet regime, preferring instead to concentrate on futile overtures to the U.S.A. In 1927, when his new party entered Dail Eireann, it gained much support from many (such as Colonel Moore and Professor William Magennis) whose previous opposition to him had been based mainly on their Catholicism. De Valera is, himself, not a bigot, yet he could use religion to get cheap votes. In 1931, he denounced the enforced appointment of a Protestant as Mayo County Librarian, although the original objection had been to that candidate's lack of the Irish language. Nor did Fianna Fail object, in principle, to the establishment of a State Censor of Publications.

Increased clericalism in the Saorstat encouraged increased Orange-ism in the north-east. In turn, this weakened the best pragmatic argument for having a Dominion rather than a Republic.

More sinister was the appearance, at the end of the nineteen-twenties, of positive clerical theories concerning the overall form of Irish society. These were especially menacing in that the clergy had no serious competition. After 1927, outside the I.W.L. and *An Phoblacht*, Socialism was as dead as Connolly. Thus, stimulated in 1931 by Pope Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno*, a form of intellectual Corporatism began to develop steadily even within the apparently left-wing party that came to power in 1932.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### WAR AND EMERGENCY, 1932-1943

*'It hath pleased the Lord to grant us the papacy. Let us enjoy it.'*

Pope Leo X

*'Before, we got nothing: now we got something. That's the difference'*

— a Louisiana Farmer on Huey Long —  
quoted in Harnett T. Kane, *Louisiana Hayride*.

#### I

#### *De Valera and Irish Jacobinism*

In the general election of February 1932 Fianna Fail won 72 seats in a Dail of 153. Its campaign had been backed by Saor Eire and the I.R.A., though not by Sinn Fein. It took power with the support of the Labour Party's 7 T.D.s, who regarded it as a lesser evil than Cumann na nGaedhael.

The new government took over a state that had developed since 1922, constitutionally, in the direction of greater sovereignty; economically, towards an expansion of usable resources; but socially, to greater frustration among peasants and workers.

In this situation its appeal was broadly leftist: Cumann na nGaedhael objected to its 'class war' propaganda. But its definite policies were little more than demands for implementation of the old Sinn Fein policies that its predecessors had diluted. Fianna Fail proposed higher tariffs, a greater use of natural resources and a development of such resources where necessary, as with crops, forestry and fish. In so far as it developed these in an appeal more directly attractive to the workers, its promises took the form not of Socialism but of Distributism. This was a theory based on the Papal Encyclicals and popularized by the English Catholics,

G. K. Chesterton and Hillaire Belloc. It advocated the distribution of property fairly equally about the population and the control of credit to prevent the consolidation of trusts. It was essentially a Catholic version of Jacobinism; the creed of small property owners in a mainly (albeit, developing) rural society. Such an ideal revived in more definite forms the hopes of many who had supported Cumann na nGaedhael, only to view its surrender to the establishment capitalists.

It is not surprising then, that in personnel the Fianna Fail parliamentary party differed little from that of Cumann na nGaedhael, save in the average size of the holdings of their respective farmer T.D.s. Between the N.C.O.s and the Commissioned Ranks of the 'Army of Destiny' there has always been a clear class division. Fianna Fail has depended upon its men of no property to return to the Dail its propertied men. A further complication arises from the fact that, whilst there were always many Fianna Fail small farmer T.D.s, none was given a ministerial post until 1939. The party left practical direction of affairs to men who may have known and sympathized with the predicaments of workers and small farmers, but whose chosen callings left them unequivocally bourgeois. All this means merely that Fianna Fail's power structure mirrored fairly accurately that of Irish society as a whole. It had no real intent of consciously changing the latter.

How near it would go in this depended on its leadership. Eamon de Valera was in unquestioned control. He is the third of Ireland's charismatic leaders. Whereas O'Connell directed the rise of modern Irish Nationalism and Parnell the bourgeois revolution therein, de Valera is the protector of the resultant bourgeois Irish Catholic régime. But how far he sees himself as such is doubtful. His aim appears more personal than social: the struggle of a man aiming to achieve and maintain personal leadership of a united nation. (Incidentally, after 1922 he has been in this as unsuccessful as O'Connell and Parnell were in their conscious aims. But he has been the agent of circumstances preventing any ideological development or social revolution in the twenty-six counties.)

His aims are entirely consistent with those of a politically shrewd professional man with little economic or social theory — which is what he is. His background is also a guide to his higher achievements, which are entirely in the sphere of linguistic Nationalism. He supervised the Departments of External Affairs, Defence, Justice and Education, either personally or through colleagues agreeable or subservient to him.

But his political instincts were shown in his appointments to the

ministries most immediately associated with material welfare. For these he picked men upon whom he could rely to give the people what they wanted. Vice-President of the Executive Council and Minister for Local Government was Sean T. O'Ceallaigh, a man with long experience of the Dublin Corporation and of its failures. The Minister for Lands and Fisheries was Patrick F. Rutledge, who had drawn up as a Republican leader in 1922 an ambitious scheme of land division. Sean MacEntee became Minister for Finance; he is a Belfast Catholic and ex-Socialist who married into a very Catholic family (his brother-in-law is Cardinal Michael Browne); in 1932, he was still ready to tax the rich. Tariffs and tillage were given to dedicated men; Sean Lemass, an enterprising member of a Dublin petty bourgeois family, took Industry and Commerce; his friend, Dr James Ryan, took Agriculture.

Fianna Fail showed itself assiduous in making minor changes. Michael Hayes was superseded as Ceann Comhairle by the Fianna Fail leader, Frank Fahy. The Ministers set a good example by insisting on taking pay cuts though, as the reduced pay was made tax-free, the loss was less real than apparent. In what *Dublin Opinion* called 'the flight from the top hat' ministers renounced the wearing of formal clothes at public functions. But the last resolution was dented in August by Sean T. O'Ceallaigh's donning such garb to visit King George V at Ottawa.

More significant was Fianna Fail's stand on Ireland's relationship with Britain as exemplified in the Oath to the King and in the payment of the land annuities. The government argued that the Treaty gave only the form for an oath that T.D.s might take, not an order that the oath be taken, and that therefore it could be eliminated without negotiation. As for payment of the annuities to Britain, its legality was held to be dependent only on the 1923 Land Act. The Anglo-Irish agreements enforcing them had never been ratified by the Dail as formal Treaties. However the government was prepared, in the interests of neighbourliness, to enter into negotiations on them and also on the money owed Ireland by the Union's over-taxation and by British unilateral departure from the Gold Standard.

But the land annuities amounted to £3,996,000 per annum. They were one-third of the money drawn annually from Ireland by Britain, and the latter's biggest single draw therefrom. The British Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, J. H. Thomas, was a finished type of metropolitan labour leader, being now an enthusiastic supporter of imperialism.

First Thomas refused to negotiate. The Irish government withheld the half-yearly annuity payments in its own treasury. He then offered terms of mediation on an exclusively Commonwealth basis. After the fiasco of the Boundary Commission, no Irish Republican could have accepted this.

In July, Britain passed the Irish Free State (Special Duties) Act which taxed the food and animal imports from Ireland. It then offered a proposal for mediation subject to an immediate return to the *status quo ante*. Instead, the Saorstát passed the Emergency Imposition of Duties Act which gave the Executive Council the power, subject to formal ratification by the Dáil, to tax imports for eight months at a time. It was generally recognized that these powers would be used mainly against British exports, as indeed they were. The 'Economic War' had begun.

In the new struggle, Ireland seemed outmatched. Not only was it fighting at a time of depression, but it sent 92% of its exports to the U.K. and received only 7% of the latter's.

But Fianna Fáil had begun before July to implement its high tariff policy. It had also prepared plans for economic self-sufficiency. The new fight meant merely the intensification of such schemes. This, added to the regime's initial increases in social welfare benefits, ensured its majority. This was shown when de Valera, wishing to end his dependence upon the Labour Party, had the seventh Dáil dissolved after less than a year. The general election of January 1933 gave Fianna Fáil alone more votes than the less belligerent parties, Cumann na nGaedhach, National Centre (the heir to the Farmers' Party) and Independents. As Labour supported the government on the foreign issue, its opponents were clearly in a minority.

In action, Fianna Fáil implemented most of its promises. Tariffs were imposed on a wide variety of goods to stimulate home production therein; between 1931 and 1939 the ad valorem tariff level rose from 9% to 35%, amongst the highest in the world. Bounties were given to tillage growers and the mainly small farmer producers of 'farmyard' products, though they were not given the graziers, who were most hit by the 'War'. Lemass introduced price control to prevent inflation and offered free meat vouchers to the unemployed. He offered financial encouragement to entrepreneurs who wished to benefit from the tariffs, and placed limits on the ability of foreign entrepreneurs to so benefit. In certain special cases, he initiated state-sponsored bodies to carry out the entrepreneurial function. This was especially notable as regards the winning of turf and the production of cement, both to replace British



imports. Later there was created the Irish commercial airline, Aer Lingus. The Shannon Scheme was followed, from 1936, by a Liffey Scheme. MacEntee encouraged the repatriation of external assets. All this was associated with a policy of increased social benefits, more housing and the introduction of the rural labourer into the benefits of his urban equivalent. Cumann na nGaedhael policies on fishing and afforestation were somewhat accelerated. The one major sphere in which a decision was not taken was in banking; in 1934, the government set up a commission, mainly of bankers and conservative economists, to investigate this. In external affairs, de Valera more than maintained the diplomatic standards set up by O'Higgins and MacGilligan.

But even at this time the contradictions of practical populism were apparent. If the bourgeoisie expanded, so did the powers of the bureaucracy to protect the propertiless.

Again, despite Labour's protests, land and sea transport continued scarcely changed in private hands. This had two results. Carriage of production was directed towards, or through, Dublin, and accordingly, the pressures to look to Britain for an export market were maintained. Similarly, Ireland's merchant marine was allowed to decline until the Second World War revived attention to it. To these pressures were added the circumstances of world slump to handicap the search for alternative markets to Britain's.

The small, tariff-fostered, industries did not want new markets: they were satisfied with the safe home one. But this was too small and too poor for any long-term hopes of expanded sales. In any case, 'Self-Sufficiency' was impossible. Many of the new industries themselves depended on imports. Thus the bounties on exports remained aimed at the British market and the government remained anxious to reach an agreement before that market was lost.

And, at the same time, no attempt was made to differentiate between trade with the north-east and trade with the rest of the U.K. In this, the government was at one with its main opponents, who were from 1933 'the United Ireland Party', but as a high tariff party it bore the onus of the duty of thinking out the implications of its policies on Irish unity. Instead, the reality of Anglo-Northern Irish trade ties were ignored.

The (normally adverse) trade balance figures from 1929 to 1934 showed a continued worsening. It was to be estimated later that the Economic War represented a decline of 1/5th in the Irish rate of economic growth. Consumer prices began to rise from 1934, though the national income had begun to increase (for the first time since 1929) from the previous year. As far as can be

seen, unemployment was rising until 1936, though this effect comes, in part, from the widening of the range of benefits to cover the rural unemployed.

But Britain was also hurt. The tariffs could not completely make up for the loss of the annuities. Britain's necessary food imports had often to be augmented from outside the Sterling Area.

On January 3rd, 1935, an agreement established quotas for Britain and Ireland's respective major exports: coal and cattle. This was negotiated annually until replaced by the Trade Agreement of April 25th, 1938.

On the latter date, the other Anglo-Irish Agreements ended formally a period of constitutional change. In 1934 de Valera had abolished the oath after his Bill to this effect had been obstructed by the Seanad, which in 1936 he abolished with the Universities' Dail representation. In 1932 his ministers' insults had driven out the Saorstát's Governor-General, James MacNeill, who had been replaced with an elderly party notability as 'Seanaschal' at a reduced salary and prominence. In 1936 he had the actual post abolished. He had formally ended the right of appeal to the British Privy Council in 1933 and gained the recognition of its loss from that Council in 1935. In December 1936 he had used the crisis of King Edward VIII's abdication to declare that the Saorstát was in the British Commonwealth only insofar as it accepted the authority of the British Monarch in external relations. This change was not mentioned in the new (Republican style) Constitution of 1937. This uninspiring publication was passed by the Irish when they voted in the general election of July 1937. It was a throw-back in some ways. It provided for an elected President, instead of an appointed Governor-General or Seanaschal, for a 'Taoiseach' of a 'Government' instead of a 'President of an Executive Council', for a new, weaker Seanad on pseudo-vocational lines and a restored Referendum, which was made necessary for a constitutional change after 1941. It also enclosed a long section enshrining the social principles that were to bind the new state: in practice, these are too qualified to be fully effective. The word 'Republic' is never actually mentioned. This was in the hope of winning back the north-east. The new entity took the title 'Eire' for the whole island; in practice, the name stuck to the twenty-six counties.

Fianna Fail's policies were disliked increasingly by the other Republican groups. Sinn Féin had opposed Fianna Fail from the beginning. But, as a force, it was of steadily decreasing prestige. By 1932, Stack was dead and Art O'Connor had retired to the law

practice that would obtain him a circuit judgeship. Other departures followed. In October 1934 Mary MacSwiney and Brian O'Higgins left the party when it allowed its members to accept the I.R.A. Civil War pensions offered by the government. In January 1936 Fr. O'Flanagan was expelled for broadcasting over Radio Eireann. From 1934 to 1949, the President of Sinn Fein was Mrs Margaret Buckley, a woman of considerable intelligence, prominent in the Women Workers' Union, but without the national prestige of her predecessors. In December 1938 the rump 'Government of the Irish Republic' surrendered its powers formally to the Army Council of the I.R.A.

This body caused the Government more embarrassment. At first, it was prepared to be fairly quiescent, although openly militant. But in August 1932 a potentially Fascist body, the Army Comrades Association, was formed among Saorstat Army veterans, and grew with the feeling amongst bourgeoisie and gentry against the 'Economic War'. The I.R.A. began to attack this physically. It did the same to meetings of the opposition parties, Cumann na nGaedhael and National Centre and to retailers of such British goods as Bass beer. These attacks forced these interests closer together. After the election of January 1933 which had defeated its allies so decisively, the A.C.A. became a formally Fascist National Guard with a blue shirt. Finally, in September 1933, the political bodies merged under the Presidency of the National Guard Leader, the dismissed Commissioner of the Garda Siochana, General Eoin O'Duffy. Republican-Blueshirt clashes reached new depths of viciousness.

Fianna Fail was in a difficult position. Many of its supporters sympathized with the I.R.A. Yet this body was a threat to law and order by its existence as a private army, by its propaganda and by the crimes that many of its members were willing to commit for the cause. Accordingly, de Valera moved to divide the I.R.A. First, he offered pensions to its Civil War veterans, then he initiated an armed police (existing still as the plain clothes 'Special Branch') and, in November 1933 he started a militia. The two later moves were to attract many who might otherwise join I.R.A., or Blueshirts. About the latter body he could be less inhibited; he declared it an illegal organization.

In 1934, this policy began to show results. In April the left-wing of the I.R.A. formed a Popular Frontist body, The Republican Congress, to fight elections. This was promptly denounced by the Army Council, but maintained itself precariously. In September, O'Duffy resigned as leader of his 'Fine Gael' (which

means much the same as 'Cumann na nGaedhael'), after disputes with the parliamentary politicians. He led a section on the Blueshirts to form a National Corporative Party. Cosgrave endeavoured to maintain the Opposition as before. But the Coal-Cattle Agreements confused the Irish political divisions still further. Blueshirts and I.R.A. became increasingly irrelevant. In May 1935 the latter's headquarters were closed 'for trying to hold an illegal sweepstake'. The next year, there were new I.R.A. murders. Then MacBride and MacSwiney joined in forming a new political party 'Cumann Poblachta na hEireann'. Both this and the I.R.A. and its auxiliaries were banned in June, only one Fianna Fail T.D. dissenting. This was followed in October by Fine Gael's disbanding its Blueshirt organization.

The growing distrust of military Republicanism was paralleled by growing distrust for the Fianna Fail policy. In the Dublin and Cork municipal elections of June 1936, the government candidates were defeated by sheer apathy. By July 1937, many of the non-voters were aligned behind the Labour Party, whose new leader, William Norton, had been outmatching de Valera's Republicanism. In the general election of this month, it gained seats in Dublin City. But its advance persuaded many Fine Gael supporters that their aims were in danger, while their party's bad showing in this contest made them doubt its possibilities. The Anglo-Irish Agreements gave them reasons for conciliation with Fianna Fail. Cosgrave recognized this by putting forward only 74 candidates, just 5 more than an overall Dail majority, in the election of June 1938. Thus Fianna Fail regained its dominance, and Labour Deputies were again limited to the countryside.

The agreements that ended the 'Economic War' and ensured the move of conservative opinion towards Fianna Fail were three in number: two political, one economic. In the political ones, 'Eire' won all its claims except the north-east. The U.K. abandoned its garrisons in the three treaty ports and its claim to use them in wartime. It made no objection to the new Irish constitution. It surrendered its claims to land annuities and minor payment for a lump £10,000,000.

This settlement and the subsequent general election were the starting for a propaganda campaign for Irish unity. This was more productive in side effects than in its expected results. The Northern Ireland Government held a general election that reaffirmed its authority. Then, mighty in its righteousness, it banned all anti-partition meetings in its area.

In 'Eire' there was doubt about the campaign's techniques.



Louie Bennett, veteran of the I.W.W.U., formed an Irish Association with prominent Northern Irish figures, including Unionists. She hoped that mutual trust would lead to an end to partition but that even short of this, good relations might be established.

But the anti-partition campaign encouraged the revival of the I.R.A., banned no longer under the new Constitution, with the moral authority of the 'Second Dail' and the backing of many who were frustrated by existing political stagnation. MacBride and Twomey having been extinguished with Cumann Poblachta, control was held now by the Army's new Chief of Staff, Sean Russell. He initiated a campaign of total war against the British, being prepared to ally with the Germans and stage terrorist coups in Britain for the purpose. The government rushed through an Offences Against the State Act in February 1939. In June 1939 the act was used to ban the I.R.A. But it remained active.

The economic agreement had longer term results. It restored Anglo-Irish trading to the 1932 position, subject to the Ottawa duties and to vested interests that had been developed by the Economic War. In Britain, such an interest was represented by the farmers, now supported by a system of deficiency payments. In 'Eire' such a one was the new tariff-backed industries. In the net result the agreement left 'Eire' with an actual credit balance in British trade.

The agreement benefited the graziers and large capitalists at the expense of the small farmers. In August 1938 a number of such men formed a political party to fight future elections: this was Clann na Talmhan, or 'the sons of the soil'.

This party was closely imbued with the clericalist theories that had been developing since 1931 and which were not formalized in the new constitution. The clergy were getting restive: Fianna Fail's policies had encouraged bourgeois (and bureaucratic) growth. In January 1939 de Valera threw a sop in the shape of a commission to look into the prospects for the Vocational Organization of society.

Outside agriculture, it seems that the trade agreement encouraged an embryo slump; unemployment figures began to rise again. There were, however, other reasons for such a development. The Banking Commission's Report, published in August 1938, predicted it as a result of the government's cheap money policies. Lemass's difficulties in weathering all the needs of Irish defence revealed by the Munich crisis in October may also have had a deleterious effect. But the fact remains that many of the new small manufacturers were doubtfully competitive. And even the agree-



ment's safeguards could not wholly reassure such people. How far the possibilities of a slump went were never revealed. The beginning of the Second World War changed conditions.

On September 3rd 1939 de Valera proclaimed Irish neutrality in the World War. His decision was approved by the majority of 'Eire's' inhabitants. They agreed with what was the principle of the British cause, but doubted the sincerity of Britain's adherence to all its implications. After all, most of them had been taught to remember that Pearse and Connolly had declared the Germans to be their 'gallant allies in Europe'. Few were really convinced that Nazi crimes were any more than rehearsed British propaganda stories of 1914-1918. Above all, no government could have lasted allied to a state that maintained garrisons in six of its historic counties.

But Irish neutrality did increase Unionist feeling in the north-east. In practice, admittedly, the Northern Irish took full advantage of de Valera's early persuasion of Britain not to conscript them and much resentment of neutrality seems to have arisen from jealousy, rather than from loyalty to the allied cause. Nonetheless, resentment was stimulated; a few days after neutrality was proclaimed, there were new Protestant sectarian riots, though these, being unnecessary and prejudicial to Ulster conservatism, were damped down by the employers. Only a few politicians of 'Eire' recognized the situation. On the left, the Republican Socialist, George Gilmore, urged that the declaration of full (= extra-Commonwealth) Republican status be combined with full alliance against the Axis. On the right, James Dillon, son of the late leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, himself Deputy Leader of Fine Gael urged full alliance with the U.K., both to conciliate Northern Ireland and because of his belief in Britain and her institutions; as a result, he and his ally, Nugent, had to leave Fine Gael in February 1942.

But Dillon retained his seat in the Dail as an Independent. The one T.D., who had serious leanings to Fascist policies, Patrick Belton, was expelled from Fine Gael in October 1940 and lost his seat in the first wartime general election in June 1943.

And Irish neutrality was essentially benevolent for the U.K. The phrase 'England's difficulty: Ireland's opportunity' took a new meaning. 'Eire's' exercise of the neutral's freedom to trade meant in practice, its trading with Britain and not with blockaded Germany. Many Irishmen fought in the British forces or worked in British industry (though many did so from need of a job). Some 97,800 British refugees went to Ireland and many British

and, later, American servicemen took their leave there.

All such services were paid for; other extensions of neutrality were unpaid. Allied aircraft flew from Northern Ireland bases across Donegal to the Atlantic. On occasional crash landings, their pilots were allowed to return to British territory whilst Germans stranded similarly were interned. The Allies got information from Irish weather stations. A rescue ship was moored at Killybegs, Co. Donegal, to help vessels in trouble. After a major air-raid on Belfast in April 1941 fire engines were sent from Dublin to help the local fire brigades.

The policy of neutrality was probably the only one possible in the circumstances. Ireland was extraordinarily vulnerable, having a coastline of 1,600 miles, including some of Europe's first harbours, and lacking in 1939 a navy, fighter planes, heavy artillery or bomb-proof shelters. At the same time, it was in close proximity to the one major belligerent with whom it had a material difference. Alliance with Germany (or perhaps, even less, benevolent neutrality) would have meant invasion by the allies. Alliance with Britain would have meant internal dissension, unless, perhaps, it had been accompanied by such a constitutional change as Gilmore advocated.

Both possibilities appeared. Germany became very interested in 'Eire' as a possible base from which to invade Britain. It was not well placed to mount an all-out attack, so it preferred subversion. Agents were sent to contact the I.R.A. either for help to enter Britain to spy or to inspire a revolt to overthrow de Valera in favour of an anti-British government. In August 1940 Russell, who had been out of Ireland when war broke out, was sent home in a U-boat to stir up such a rising. He died on the way.

Against this threat the government had amended its constitution so that it could proclaim a state of emergency that effectively wiped out the individual's constitutional freedoms. Acts were passed to have suspected subversives interned or tried in special courts that could impose the death penalty without appeal. A political censorship was introduced. This legislation was administered by a group of Ministers, headed by de Valera's friend, Frank Aiken (himself a former Chief of Staff of the I.R.A.), the popular Oscar Traynor, Minister for Defense, and the stolid Gerâld Boland (Harry's brother), Minister for Justice. They operated ruthlessly. No German agent escaped from 'Eire'; only three approached success. On the other hand, Russell's successor, Stephen Hayes, was ineffectual and ended by being suspected of being a government agent (a mystery never cleared satisfactorily).

Less certain were possibilities of British and (from 1941) American action against 'Eire' to seize its ports and end a rumoured centre of spies and an actual centre of opposition to Northern Irish conscription. Such action became decreasingly necessary as a naval base was developed at Londonderry. It would have necessitated the deployment of an Army of Occupation. Nonetheless, Churchill did give the matter consideration.

Against prospects of invasion, the government built up its armed forces from 30,000 to 175,000 men. Precautions were initiated against air raids. A home guard (Local Security Force) was started. There remained a great weakness in lack of heavy weapons, however. In May 1940 an all-party Defence Council was set up to advise the government. Fine Gael began to demand this body's development into a National Government. De Valera refused; the pro-Fianna Fail Parnellite veteran, Henry Harrison, justified his stand by pointing out that such a government would amount to a Fianna Fail-Fine Gael coalition stimulating the formation of a purely left-wing opposition: this would split the country.

More immediate and more permanent effects of the War appeared in the economic sphere. Production of foodstuffs was geared more than ever to the British market. This benefited the graziers more than the small farmers. Similarly the shortage of American cereals necessitated a compulsory tillage policy that favoured the farmer with a lot of good land.

As early as the Munich war scare, Lemass had increased his efforts to stimulate turf-burning and the electricity schemes based thereon. In September 1939 he became Minister for Supplies (a special war-time post) and, as such, organized the purchase of stocks of materials by both private and public firms. At the same time he organized the nucleus of a merchant fleet. MacEntee, his successor as Minister for Industry and Commerce, carried out the rationing of food (Lemass later rationed clothing), and the subsidization of the prices thereof. He also attempted to impose price control and did impose a measure of control on wages. Regional and County Commissioners were set up administer areas in case of emergency and voluntary parish councils sprang up to advise them.

Yet discontent was inevitable. Despite its peat, Ireland depended upon Britain for coal and oil, both of which had to be rationed. All rations weighed heavily on the populace. The farmers were aggrieved by the shortage of cereals and its necessary corollaries. The trade unions (including both I.T.G.W.U. and

W.U.I.) were even more aggrieved by the wages pause, and by the subsequent Trade Union Act that was to discipline the trade unions against strikes arising against that pause.

Then, in 1942, both Republicans and Socialists were contemptuous of a Central Bank Act, in which the government carried out the majority recommendations of the Banking Commission. Irish banking and currency remained subordinate to, and dependent on, the British system.

New parties appeared. In February 1941 Coras na Poblachta ('the Republican Council') was formed of ex-I.R.A. leaders and disillusioned Fianna Fail-ites. More energetic was the Rightist Ailtiri na hAiseirighe ('Brotherhood of the Rising') which started in September 1942. But Labour and Clann na Talmhan made the most headway in the local elections of August 1942. Fine Gael gained little; though it had opposed the Trade Union Act, this had alienated much of its traditional support.

After the general election of June 1943 Clann na Talmhan and Labour Deputies totalled together the entire Fine Gael representation. Fianna Fail's chief supporting interests of the 1930s were beginning to rebel.

## II

### *The emancipated peasantry*

Cumann na nGaedhael had fulfilled the Irish bourgeois revolution. So Fianna Fail came to power as the fulfiller of the Irish peasant revolution. It was the small farmers, not the urban workers, who put de Valera in power first.

But they backed a programme that was not Socialist but Agrarian-Distributist. The ending of the supply of Irish rent to Britain was in the name of private landowning. The big estates were not to be nationalized but divided between small landowners or so as to make landowners from the landless. The development of tillage was aimed to benefit one group of landowners rather than another. Such principles embarrassed the bourgeoisie, rather than threatening it. For they maintained the principles of capitalism and strengthened it in the countryside.

But the immediate reactions of the various agricultural groups to Fianna Fail's agricultural policy differed very considerably.



That the ranchers would be against it was obvious. They benefited from their trade with England more than they lost by paying annuities thither. The dairy farmers were similarly doubtful. It was the small farmers and agricultural labourers who were the initial advocates of Fianna Fail.

At first, they were justified. Dr James Ryan, Minister for Agriculture, continuously from 1932 to 1947, himself a hobby owner of a small farm, initiated subsidies for wheat growing, and a minimum quota for home-grown wheat in home-made bread. In 1933 he gave rate relief on the first £10 payable on agricultural land and the next year developed this into a further system of small farm grants. For the agricultural labourers he extended the coverage of welfare benefits in 1933 and in 1936 established a somewhat bureaucratic system to guarantee them a minimum wage. In the meantime the successive Ministers for Lands, Patrick Rutledge (1932-1933) and Senator Joseph Connolly (1933-1936) ended the limitations on the Land Commission's resettlement powers to speed up the division of land among the landless.

But perhaps the most popular governmental policy was the 'Economic War' itself. Though in the long run the farmers had still to pay half the annuities, albeit to their own government, the smallest of them gained the entire remission thereof in the first year of their withholding. The exporters amongst them were given bounties on their produce that more than cancelled out the opposing British duties, while cattle, the ranchers' chief export, was not so well protected. The latter fact reduced the price of beef: a further benefit to small farmers and labourers, few of whom had previously been able to afford this.

Naturally the ranchers opposed this policy. The position of the dairy farming class is more interesting. It retained the grant to its co-operatives (but they continued to decline). It shared in the benefits of the export bounties. But, at the same time, it tended to be worse hit than the less commercially-minded small farmers, by the general decline in agricultural prices especially for stock. This was accompanied from 1934 by a general rise in retail prices. Medium farmers were also hurt by the encouragement of wheat-growing on the small farmers' terms and (after 1936) by the necessity for paying labour a minimum wage. Many of them gave the Blueshirts their mass support. In 1937, they formed an Irish Farmers' Federation; in 1938 a prominent figure in the I.F.F., Patrick Cogan, was elected to the Dail for Co. Wicklow.

More benevolent was Muintir na Tire ('The People of the Land') This was founded in May 1931 by Fr John Martin Hayes,



then curate of Castleiney, Co. Tipperary. He had been associated in the Grain-Growers Association, one of the bodies that had arisen out of the disintegrating carcass of the I.F.U. However, he realized that rural problems were social as well as economic. He noted that since 1925 the isolated farmer had had no representative body between himself and his County Council. Accordingly he created Muintir na Tire, with aims social, educative, economic and recreational – in that order.

Basically, Muintir na Tire is an organization of all peasants, both propertied and propertyless, to work out rural problems by mutual aid. From 1937 it has developed as an organization of parish guilds to include all dwellers of the relevant units.

These guilds have a remarkable number of achievements to their credit. They include the planting of trees, the electrification of villages, the organization of sewerage, the sponsoring of industries and, most famous, the building of halls.

But, like the government itself, Muintir na Tire has been content to work within the Irish power structure. Fr Hayes was careful to keep it non-political. Its theory is drawn from the Papal social Encyclicals. The question of the division of property or the transcendence of its rights even within the parish is ignored. Class differences are minimized. And it has refused to oppose the bureaucracy by demanding greater powers and juridical basis for its guilds. Indeed, when the wartime parish councils demanded such things, it allied with the government against them. It is dependent on the goodwill of the Catholic clergy (although non-sectarian), and it has thus been suppressed in the Dublin archdiocese. Its dependence on American aid handicapped its growth during the Second World War. By 1949 guilds existed in 220 parishes out of 950 (in the Republic of Ireland). And as Fr Jerome Toner, an admirer of the movement, pointed out in 1953 'Muintir na Tire has not progressed appreciably in the counties where the people and the land are poorest'.

If Muintir na Tire itself had little effect in the small farm areas, its *weltanschauung* was encouraged to develop therein by circumstance. The small farmer's position was not changed fundamentally for the better. The government avoided dealing with the problems of marketing and of transport. It appointed, to deal with the problem of credit, a commission that discovered that all that was wrong was that there was too much. The subsidies were mere palliatives; indeed, the encouragement of tillage benefited in practice the farmer with good land, and plenty of it. After 1935 the position of the cattle exporter in the agricultural economy was

stronger than in 1929. Above all the chief small farm products, pigs and poultry (especially the first), began to decline. Between 1931 and 1960 not only were the numbers of pig-farmers declining, but the proportion of small pig-farmers within the total fell from 20% to 12%. Reasons for this included the problems stated already. But they were now augmented by the 1930 pig subsidy policy of Northern Ireland and increased price for maize under 'Economic War' conditions. What was more the system of control, set up by the Executive Council to counter that, tended, by arbitrary limitations on the supply of pigs in a still free enterprise economy, to make things still worse. Between 1936 and 1946 small farmers emigrated at the rate of 4,270 per annum.

But at the same time the labourers gained their wage whilst the larger farmers were hurt by the 'Economic War'. These facts emphasized the natural tendency of the agricultural property-owners to ally, once the annuities problem had been solved.

Political fact reinforced social fact. After 1932 the Labour Party made little appeal to small farmers. The I.R.A. and its associates were similarly unable to revive the dynamic of Saor Eire. Those small farmers who became dissatisfied with the two chief political parties looked for leadership to their bigger brethren who had more time to give it. The latter offered co-operation through Muintir na Tire. In 1933 they changed the old Unionist United Irishwomen's Association to the Irish Countrywomen's Association. More important was the small farmer's contemporary dependence on his parish priest for social theory. What he received came straight from St Peter's.

The immediate cause for formulating this viewpoint into specifically political action was the 1938 Trade Agreement, the resultant ending of the small farmers' bounties and the threat of competition with British farmyard products, now protected by the system of deficiency payments.

On the 15th August 1938 representatives of the small farmers of twelve counties met at Athenry, Co. Galway, and founded 'Clann na Talmhan', the 'Family of the Land', or the Peasants' Party. It drew its support from the disillusioned farmers of all groupings. Its programme demanded the national provision of rural amenities, schemes of afforestation, drainage, land reclamation and rural industries, the derating of the poor law valuation on agricultural land in respect of acreage and employees, and the end of the Land Commission's powers over tenanted land, subject to good husbandry. In the national sphere, it demanded credit reform against British control thereof, certain increases in welfare

benefits, a fully vocational Seanad and the proclamation of the Republic.

Fianna Fail's policy in agriculture had failed to end discontent. Its fisheries policy, operated at first by Rutledge and, from 1933, by Ryan, was even more negative. In 1939 it provided for future reform of freshwater fisheries and in 1941 it created an Irish Maritime Institute.

The administration's forestry policy was more dynamic. Whereas between 1922 and 1932 30,000 acres were acquired for tree planting, in the next ten years the acreage was 107,000. Even so in 1939 Ireland's proportion of forestry land was still the lowest in Europe.

The outbreak of the Second World War began a period in which the farmers' dissatisfaction was heightened. This did not result from any actual decline in their material well-being. Between 1939 and 1944 their share of the national income rose from 27.8% to 35.3%.

But this was less than the farmers' 50% share of the national product. The discrepancy was brought to the notice of the farmers, as the government appealed to them (and successfully) for increases in production. That body's own offers to the farmers included its creation in 1939 of an advisory and feeble Farmers' Council, made up of representatives of County Agricultural Committees and Farmers' organizations. It also ended tardily the quota system of pigs supplied to bacon factories (1940) and, in the same year as the latter, a grants scheme for farm improvements.

Between the groups of farmers there remained differences. The only export outlet left to Ireland was the British market. Its capacity for foodstuffs was limited by British government policy. Its one fairly certain demand was for store cattle for breeding. These were the speciality of the ranchers: not of the dairy farmers who suffered accordingly.

The store cattle trade was hurt by the ending of American cereal supplies under the U.S.A. neutrality regulation against trading with countries in the 'security zone' around Europe. The Irish government responded to this by a policy of compulsory tillage subject to confiscation of land untilled and later fining or imprisonment. This benefited the farmer with large areas of fertile land. It became a burden on the small farmer. He suffered also from the now total lack of American maize and the rise in the price of barley to feed his pigs. His products of poultry and potatoes remained unsubsidized.

To these crises the small farmer or medium farmer might re-

spond in one of two ways. Many of his kind moved to the towns or to England. So did many rural labourers, attracted by the £1.10s. superiority of British to Irish weekly agricultural wages. By 1942 a rural labour shortage existed.

For many farmers, the alternative was political. Clann na Talmhan waxed vigorously. In June 1940 its Chairman, Michael Donnellan, held his deposit at a bye-election in West Co. Galway. In August 1942 it won seats on the councils of various western counties. It opened negotiations with Patrick Cogan's National Agricultural Party, the political wing of the Irish Farmer's Federation. On March 15th 1943 the two bodies fused, though at the expense of the I.F.F.'s large farmer element, headed by Patrick Belton. The united body took the name Clann na Talmhan and added to its original programme demands for state economics and (to win the urban vote) rent reform. In the ensuing general election it won fourteen seats, all from rural constituencies.

### III

#### *The workers and their organizations*

The urban workers were won to Fianna Fail less by its promises than by its achievements. In February 1932 Cumann na nGaedhael and its allies (such as Byrne) gained the plurality of the votes in the urban areas. However by the general election of the next year Fianna Fail was established as the party of the urban working class. It is a position that this capitalist force has never completely lost.

Part of the reason was the 'Economic War'. For the wage-earner this was necessary to oppose British imperialism which was preventing the spread of Irish capitalism and hence employment. He benefited also from the fall in the price of beef, while the inflationary effect of tariffs was nullified by Lemass's price control.

But Fianna Fail initiated schemes that were aimed more directly to benefit him. Most notable of these was MacEntee's first Budget; it increased unemployment relief and gave grants to supply council houses and to give milk to needy children. All of this was subsidized from the new tariffs, from increased income tax and corporation profits tax and from a new surtax. Sean T. O'Ceallaigh as Minister for Local Government and his able under-



secretary, Dr Francis Ward, used MacEntee's revenue to initiate a massive house-building drive. The coverage of old age pensions was extended. A bill was initiated to abolish property qualifications for local government electors, but was opposed by the Seanad.

These policies were maintained in the eighth Dail. The Seanad's opposition to local democracy was overborne. From 1933 to 1936 the structure of National Health Insurance was streamlined. In 1935 a scheme of pensions was begun for widows and orphans. The public housing schemes grew apace; between 1932 and 1942 80,167 new houses were built compared with 26,384 in the preceding ten years. This building was backed by Planning Acts in 1934 and 1939. In the later year Public Assistance was reformed. MacEntee supplied the money for these schemes by taxing the rich. In 1934 Sean Lemass introduced workmen's compensation (although this merely implemented the proposals of a Cumann na nGaedhael-appointed Commission). From 1936 to 1939 he passed a series of Acts regulating working conditions and hours (including paid holidays).

But the latter Acts were often honoured by employers less in the observance than in the breach. This was especially true of employers in the new protected industries. The 1936 Conditions of Employment Act was also unpopular amongst women workers by what was felt to be an excessive measure of protection for them in certain trades. Despite price controls the cost of living rose steadily after 1933. Until 1935 unemployment seemed to rise, encouraged by rural depression amongst the larger farmers, augmented by reduced possibilities of emigration. And not only did many of the new factories pay low wages, but state unemployment relief schemes often paid as little as a guinea a week. Between 1932 and 1939 the Irish national real income rose more slowly than that of Britain.

Nor was Fianna Fail a Socialist party. The general election of January 1933 was precipitated by a dispute with its Labour Party supporters over Lemass's refusal to nationalize the railways. But as yet all potential left-wing alternatives were divided and subdued.

Immediately on assuming office de Valera withdrew the ban on the I.R.A. and its associate organizations. The revived groups maintained a social quiescence, carrying on military manoeuvres unsupported by economic demands. From August 1932 their members took part in attacks on Cumann na nGaedhael and on importers of such British goods as Bass beer. In March 1933 the



Army Council restated its policy in a form vague and at times naive though still superior to those of Fianna Fail and Cumann na nGaedhael. No steps were taken to expand this. *An Phoblacht* carried on a flirtation with the principles of Social Credit. The I.R.A. continued to act as over-zealous support for Fianna Fail.

On April 10th 1934 George Gilmore and others of the left-wing of the I.R.A. tried to provide more positive Republicanism by forming a Republican Congress to organize a movement to achieve the full realization of Fianna Fail's original policies. The majority of the Army Council, led by MacBride and Twomey, acted against Congress within a fortnight, expelling its leaders, O'Donnell and Michael Price. On the other hand, the Irish Labour Party and Sinn Fein both rejected association within the new body. In the end, the only political body supporting Congress was the Communist Party of Ireland that young James Larkin and the Northern Irishman, Sean Murray, had revived out of the Workers' Revolutionary Groups in June 1933.

At its first conference in September 1934 Congress split. On the one hand, Gilmore, O'Donnell and Frank Ryan (ex-editor of *An Phoblacht*) with the C.P.I., offered a policy restating the demand for an independent Irish Republic. Against this, Price and the Connolly family proposed that this be given a formal class emphasis by demanding a Workers' Republic, such as might better appeal to the north-east. The former were successful. The latter seceded and later joined the Labour Party. Congress was now merely the C.P.I. writ large but simultaneously it was a rival of the I.R.A. It was thus attacked by both the latter body and the clericals. It existed for two years, more in shadow than in substance, before disappearing entirely. Ryan led a force of two hundred men for the Spanish Republic against Franco, was captured and died in 1944, a prisoner of the Nazis. O'Donnell has continued his career as a literary Republican. Gilmore after an abortive electoral campaign in 1937, has lived mainly in retirement for many years.

The disappearance of Congress, the simultaneous banning of the I.R.A., on top of the new allegiance of Price and the Connollys, helped revive the Labour Party. From March 1932 it had been led by young William Norton. Unlike Johnson or O'Connell; he was a consummate political opportunist, with few clear principles. He became leader when his party held the lowest number of seats: seven. Dublin City was alienated: the west had been renounced. Norton determined as far as was possible to reverse the policies that had created this situation. He had already determined to play the Republican card. As Chairman of the Labour Party in

November 1931 he engineered the expulsion of two T.D.s, Morissey and Anthony, for supporting Cosgrave's last coercion laws. Now he welcomed Price into the party and had its constitution amended in 1936 to demand a 'Worker's Republic'. At the same time, no analysis was allowed to back the concept, which concealed a policy little changed from that of T.J. O'Connell.

Labour's outstanding problem was now Larkin. His readmittance to the party was an impossibility as yet; a majority of its T.D.s were I.T. and G.W.U. members. But Larkin was himself starting to take a more moderate attitude; he did not himself join the new C.P.I. in June 1933 and in the local elections later that year his own candidates were differentiated from the Communists. In 1937 he was returned to the I.T.U.C. as delegate from the Dublin Trades Council, but his opponents were still able to block the admission to the farmers of the W.U.I.

While the Labour Party grew in its apparent radicalism, the I.T.U.C. benefited from the expansion of industry. Between 1932 and 1941 trade union membership rose from 117,000 to 126,000.

'Workers' Republicanism' and increased trade unionism united in the general election of July 1937. For the first time for ten years Labour won seats in Dublin City. Larkin returned to the Dail also; now he was not a bankrupt.

But the party offered little beyond this 'Workers Republic' and an increasing adherence to the theory of Social Credit. Fianna Fail speakers began to warn against the dangers of Communism. In May 1938 the Opposition united to defeat the government over its refusal to establish a Civil Service Arbitration Tribunal. De Valera went to the country again and presented himself as the victor of the 'Economic War'. Cosgrave offered only token resistance. Labour and Larkin lost their Dublin seats. In 1940 after an appeal by O'Connell and I.N.T.O., encouraged by the Catholic hierarchy, the party withdrew its demand for a 'Workers' Republic'.

By this time, the Emergency was giving the Labour movement new causes for action. The housing programme had to be reduced. Inflation was accelerated. Starvation reappeared. Emigration increased encouraged by the foreign war boom.

Since 1939 MacEntee had been Minister for Industry and Commerce. As such, he carried out measures of food rationing and price control, of which neither had much effect. In May 1940 he initiated a Standstill Order on Wages.

Larkin led the subsequent fight against this. In the I.T.U.C. his prestige rose vis-à-vis that of O'Brien. The latter began to have to

resort to openly dictatorial methods to maintain the W.U.I.'s isolation. Trade union membership continued to rise.

In 1941 MacEntee turned to discipline the trade unions. He introduced a Bill which limited the right of negotiation to licensed bodies and set up a tribunal that could grant the sole negotiating power in firms to trade unions representing a majority of the workers therein. Again, Larkin headed the opposition to this. O'Brien was also active, but he was less committed. This was partly because of his old feud; partly because he saw possibilities in the Bill of ending the position in Ireland of British-backed unions with one of which (the A.T.G.W.U.) he had been feuding since 1934. The Bill was passed. Active opposition to it collapsed.

Of the political parties, Fianna Fail alone supported the Act: but it had the Oireachtas majority. Fine Gael, trying to live down its past fascism, had opposed the wages pause and now attacked the Trade Union Bill. But it feared for its respectable supporters and denounced the proposals because they 'anticipated the Report of the Vocational Organization Committee'. Thus it got the worst of both worlds.

The Labour Party's opposition to the Act appeared more credible. In reality it needed such a cause. Despite its ex-leader Johnson's brilliant demolition of Distributism, it was little removed ideologically from that position. Beneath a revolutionary phraseology, *Labour's Constructive Programme For An Organised Nation* as revised in 1941 annoys by its vagueness. It urges nationalization of credit (inspired by the policies of New Zealand's Labour Government) and of transport. The only definite proposal for nationalization of an industry relates to flour-milling. Otherwise there are traditional Republican policies of reform in afforestation, fisheries, social welfare and housing: land drainage: guaranteed high wages and agricultural prices and vague changes in local government taxation and education.

Yet its opposition to the Trade Union Act encouraged support for it to increase. Many former Fianna Fail voters turned towards it. Overtures were made to the Larkins and, through them, to members of the C.P.I. which had died again in the twenty-six counties in 1941. The defeat of the I.R.A.'s renewed campaign gave the Labour Party the backing of many disillusioned Republican fighters. But others formed their own parties – Coras na Poblácha (1941) and Ailtiri na hAiseirighe (1942).

Pressed by the growth of the Labour Party, MacEntee, Minister for Local Government from 1941, organized with Ward a number of necessary welfare reforms. Free food (1941) and fuel (1942)

supplies were assured the poorest. A special 'wet-time' insurance scheme was established for seasonal unemployment in the builders' trade (1942). The wages pause was ended for the worse-paid employees (1942). Unemployment benefits were increased (although the unemployed themselves were more strictly regimented). National Health Insurance was again streamlined. At the same time (1942) Lemass further regulated shop-workers' conditions of employment.

But the trade unions were militant. The cost of living rose steadily. A further advantage was given Labour. Sean T. O'Ceallaigh (Minister for Finance from 1939) passed in 1942 a Central Bank Act. This created a Central Bank with, as proposed by the Banking Commission, only potential authority. Labour's credit policy became more popular. In the local elections of August 1942 (the first under a democratic franchise) the party made gains all over 'Eire' and became the largest group on Dublin Corporation.

Almost immediately it lost a lot of support. It expelled Owen Sheehy-Skeffington, a prominent member of its Administrative Council, who had expressed public dissatisfaction with the party's continued reluctance to admit the elder Larkin to full membership.

But in 1943 the cost of living showed the highest increase and rose above its equivalent in any European country, most of all the U.K. At the general election in June the Labour Party put up 71 candidates. Just enough to support a government. Only 17 were successful. But they included the Larkins, despite the I.T.G.W.U. and a Fianna Fail-based Communist scare. Labour was now stronger in Dail Eireann than at any time since the fifth Dail (of 1927), the last one from which de Valera had abstained.

#### IV

#### *Gentry, bourgeoisie and blueshirts*

Fianna Fail's success lay in the fact that it reconciled its small farmer and (later) employee support to an essentially bourgeois leadership and programme. Most of its economic programme was in line completely with the aims of the National Agricultural and Industrial Development Association that had been formed in 1930 by the various Industrial Development Associations. A 'Buy Irish'



Campaign was initiated, tariffs were raised, a Control of Manufacturers Act was passed to limit foreign-backed manufacturing companies. In 1933 a Trade Loans Act gave loans on easy terms to new entrepreneurs for five years and an Industrial Credit Corporation was set up as a more permanent source of home investment cash. This was all; the 1933 general election was fought to free the government from pressures to nationalize transport; in 1934, rather than put up an Irish independent Irish credit system, it set up a Commission to consider the matter.

But, as yet Fianna Fail represented only a minority of the Irish capitalists. Its support was limited to a small group of non-Dublin businessmen and of manufacturers and aspiring manufacturers, centred on the N.A.I.D.A. MacEntee's first budget alienated potential business allies. Many new manufacturers remained loyal to Cumann na nGaedhael; William Dwyer's Sunbeam Knitwear of Cork had been developed under the tariffs of the 1920s. The Cereals Act of 1932 imposed a wheat tariff and a quota for flour, both of which annoyed the millers. Tariffs and their increase in the 'Economic War' prevented any immediate alliance between the government and the Anglo-Irish trading complex.

With the latter were associated the graziers and dairy farmers, both of which were at once dependent on the British market and hurt by the decline of world agricultural prices. It was in June 1932 that the Independent farmer T.D., Brooke Brazier, declared 'The livestock industry is a total failure'. For such as these, the 'Economic War', unaccompanied by agricultural de-rating or (for the cattle exporters) by adequate export bounties, was an unmitigated disaster. Whereas between 1929 and 1931 total Irish agricultural income had declined by £10,000,000 (20% approx.), between 1931 and 1933 it declined by £13,000,000 (or about 33.3%), mainly amongst the larger and medium farmers. To top their worries came Rutledge's Land Bill with its increase in the re-distributive powers of the Land Commission against the estates.

The working-out of such causes for unrest could be influenced by the political parties. As Fianna Fail pursued its policies to an unknown conclusion, their opponents looked to Cumann na nGaedhael or even to a new party.

Cumann na nGaedhael was not suited to opposition. It had ended its period of power by inducing a red scare. The first act of the new administration was to release the 'reds'. The new Minister for Defense, Frank Aiken, was known to have close connections with the I.R.A. Many suspected de Valera himself of being the poten-



tial Irish Lenin: others saw him merely as a Kerensky. Cosgrave's personal experience of de Valera did not impel him to calm such fears. Occasionally I.R.A. or just Fianna Fail members would attend Cumann na nGaedhael meetings to interrupt the speakers. On the other hand, many such speakers seemed to take joy in abusing the people that had rejected them; Senator Oliver St. John Gogarty devoted a long (and, for him, surprisingly boring) speech to discovering and denouncing 'the plain Irishman'; Patrick Hogan declared that 'the question was: were the Irish people fit for the Treaty?' Tempers were further frayed by the outbreak of 'Economic War'.

On August 11th Dr Thomas F. O'Higgins, a somewhat flawed version of his younger brother, founded a (Saorstat) Army Comrades Association. Officially a friendly body of veterans, it had much in common with the German Stahlhelm. While proclaiming its lack of politics, its programme declared it also to be Anti-Communist and defending the (Dominion-status) Constitution. The Fianna Fail newspaper, the *Irish Press*, took full advantage of this body's ambiguities. Republicans caused disturbances at more Cumann na nGaedhael meetings. Army Comrades began to act as stewards therein, and on a number of occasions, merely added to the chaos. By October O'Higgins was declaring 'no country in the world needs order knocked into it as much as Ireland'. The next month *An Phoblacht* declared its intention of denying free speech to 'traitors'.

By now the groups of 'traitors' had been reinforced. From August many Farmers Defence Leagues had been formed out of the larger farmers, opposing the 'War' and urging non-payment of annuities. Their backers included Belton and Heffernan; their spokesman in the Dail was a new Independent T.D., Frank MacDermot, a man of both considerable personal honour and great political naivety. On October 6th, he and the various remaining Farmer T.D.s formed a National Farmers and Ratepayers League. In January it gained a new recruit, James Dillon, son of John Dillon, the U.I.L. leader. It now changed its name to the National Centre Party.

In the subsequent general election, the National Centre Party offered vague proposals for ending the 'War' on 'honourable' terms. Cumann na nGaedhael offered to suspend the payment of annuities for two years and to renounce entirely half their payment, but it would not compromise its low tariff policy. Meetings of both parties were attacked by Republicans and defended by members of the A.C.A.

The defeat of the anti-'War' parties encouraged increased bitterness amongst their supporters. On February 10th the genuinely non-political membership of the A.C.A. withdrew from it. The next day, the Association announced that it would have its own uniform: a light blue shirt. It declared this at a meeting where the Fascist salute was given openly.

In April and May the County Councils of Dublin, Kilkenny South Tipperary and Carlow all refused to strike new rates in protest against the 'Economic War'. Writs of 'Mandamus' forced them so to do.

In February General Eoin O'Duffy had been dismissed as Commissioner of the Garda Siochana as the result of Fianna Fail backbench pressure. He was offered an alternative position as Controller of Prices but declined it and retired to private life with a pension. On July 20th 1933 he was recalled to become President of the A.C.A. which now took the ominous title of the National Guard. He embarked on a speaking tour of the Saorstát. In one speech he announced a list (never published) of 150 Communists. Elsewhere he denounced parliamentarism and the party system. The government created a new, armed, police force, 'The Broy Harriers' (after O'Duffy's successor, Colonel Eamon Broy); it is now the (political) special branch. It banned a National Guard procession in Dublin: then it banned the body itself. That revived under its former name.

All this had continued alongside a running fight between Republican and Labour elements and their opponents. To the latter, O'Duffy appeared as a possible saviour. On September 1st Cumann na nGaedhail joined National Centre and A.C.A. to form a United Ireland Party (Fine Gael). O'Duffy became President of the new body and the Blueshirts became the Young Ireland Association: the new party's youth movement. Cosgrave accepted the post of Vice-President and Chairman of the Party in Dail Eireann; MacDermot and Dillon were also Vice-Presidents. The new party had an openly Fascist programme; besides family allowances and a Housing Board, it demanded Labour Brigades for the unemployed, the replacement of all local assemblies by appointed Commissioners, the end of Proportional Representation and the establishment of vocational corporations with statutory powers to control the nation's 'economic life'. It declared its primary aim to be the reunification of Ireland as a Dominion in opposition to Fianna Fail's essential 'Republicanism'. But this proposal appears somewhat farcical when it is realized that Fine Gael's first President was a leading bogeyman for Ulster Unionists.

Only a few right-wing T.D.s remained aloof from Fine Gael. The old Unionists, Good the Businessman, and the former Nationalist M.P., Alfie Byrne (Lord Mayor of Dublin) stayed benevolently neutral, as did the Independent Labour Deputy, Anthony, (but Morrissey had become a member). The only one of a component party that refused to enter the new group was a National Centre T.D., the elderly eccentric, W. R. Kent. What was more none of those politically closest to Kevin O'Higgins sat on Fine Gael's first National Executive. Outside the Oireachtas, the United Ireland party was supported by the larger farmers and many businessmen; unofficial pressure was exerted on employees of such to make them wear the blue shirt. By March 1934 its organized wearers were said to number 103,000. Of this, the hard core had sprung from the loins of those who had helped smash the rural workers' organizations in the previous decade.

However, it was, naturally, weak amongst the small farmers and organized workers, and was unable to outdo the Republicans' Nationalism. Fascism succeeds because it alone can save imperialism from revolution. In Ireland Fianna Fail was still able to do this with little trouble compared to the Fascist states. Ireland was underdeveloped economically.

Against Fine Gael was the government and its associates, the Labour Party and the I.R.A. In December de Valera had the Young Ireland Association banned and O'Duffy arrested. Neither action had any long-term effect. O'Duffy was released under Habeas Corpus, and the blueshirt organization took the title 'The League of Youth'.

More worrying for Fine Gael was the activity of the Republicans, both I.R.A. and Fianna Fail supporters. From October 1933 Republican-Blueshirt clashes began to end fatally. And, on average, the blueshirts came off worst in such encounters.

Matters were exacerbated by Fine Gael's President. O'Duffy refused to pick a seat for himself in Dail Eireann, preferring to travel around the country holding meetings to increase support. This enabled Fianna Fail to depict him as a political coward, frightened to test himself before the electorate. In any case, his persona was not that of a charismatic political leader.

In July 1934 local election results showed that after ten months the tide had yet to turn in his favour. This rebuff encouraged his mistrust for representative institutions. But it encouraged, too, mistrust for him amongst his followers.

At the beginning of 1934, British duties on Irish cattle had reached new heights. Consumer prices began to rise while agricul-

tural prices continued to drop. Anti-government militancy among larger farmers increased accordingly. More annuities were withheld and telephone wires cut and roads blocked against bailiffs. In the south of Ireland assaults on Fianna Fail supporters became more common.

In September O'Duffy announced his support for these agitations. However, the constitutional politicians of his party, weary of apparently pointless fighting, opposed this. On September 21st he resigned, taking with him a number of blueshirts and, later, Patrick Belton. Cosgrave became President of Fine Gael, and the blueshirt leadership was placed in the hands of Commandant Edward Cronin. However, the Second Fine Gael Ard Fheis in February 1935 avoided such matters.

In January 1935 the Coal-Cattle Agreement prepared the reduction of much of the immediate bitterness between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. Meatmeal factories and tanneries helped ease the ranchers. At the same time the former was becoming alienated from the I.R.A.

These factors helped weaken the appeal of O'Duffy's green-shirted National Corporate Party which was formed in June 1935. However, by combining Republicanism with its Fascism it managed to alienate most potential supporters impartially. After eighteen months of stagnation it became a volunteer force, 700 strong, on Franco's side in the Spanish Civil War. Belton organized a Christian Front that involved members of all parties in supplying aid to the Brigade. But on its return in 1937 the alliance between O'Duffy and Belton ended in a sordid squabble over the latter's handling of the money raised. Belton returned to Fine Gael and was later returned to the Dail as one of its T.D.s. In 1940 he was expelled from it again, on a procedural matter; in 1943 he failed to hold his seat as Independent; he died in 1945. O'Duffy had died the previous year, after offering, apparently, to raise a Brigade to help the Nazis on the Russian front in the Second World War.

The Fascist tendencies remaining in Fine Gael were diverted by Cosgrave to the foreign sphere. The party condemned de Valera's support for the League of Nations' sanctions against Italy in October 1935, though in this he alienated MacDermot. Later, he urged early recognition of the Franco government in Spain. But by then he had been strengthened by his ally, Byrne's, victory in the Dublin Corporation elections and he had disbanded the League of Youth. Cronin tried to join O'Duffy in Spain, but had his offer of help refused. In the Second World War he fought in the British



Army. He died in London in 1946.

But by 1936 Fine Gael was becoming increasingly irrelevant to Irish capitalism. Fianna Fail was satisfied with the achievements of its first years in power. Such cruel necessities as the 'Economic War' were already being composed. The only firm nationalized by the administration was the foreign-owned sugar company. To stem the export of capital, MacEntee's 1936 budget restored the average level of income tax below that of Britain. The regime's final acceptance of full capitalist logic came with the trade agreement of 1938.

This was designed to hurt the new tariff-fostered industries as little as possible. In fact, it did not give much to them that they would not have received without the 'Economic War'. The new private entrepreneur was an addition to the numbers of small businessmen and was as uncompetitive as they were. The employee-security legislation of Lemass and the loopholes in the Control of Manufactures' Acts helped further to maintain these people's subordinate position. In 1947, extern holdings in Ireland amounted to £176,000,000 – nearly half the value of Ireland's external assets. Thus, despite the policy of 'Self-Sufficiency', between 1926 and 1951 the non-agricultural labour force percentage of employers and self-employed declined from 22% to 10%.

In any case, the principles of self-sufficiency had not been worked out scientifically. Its great private beneficiaries were the boot and shoe producers, paper-makers and engineers. Only the first were genuinely self-sufficient. More generally, whereas in 1928 the total value of exports had amounted to 77% that of imports, in 1938 they amounted to 59% thereof. In 1943 Lemass himself pointed out that the size of imports as a percentage of home production plus imports for use had trebled between 1929 and 1936. Between 1939 and 1946 only the clothing and footwear industries grew slightly; engineering stood still; other industries, cut off from exports, declined.

But 'Self-Sufficiency' did justify the inability of Irish capitalism to deal adequately with Irish shipping. Cross-Channel dues remained lower than the dues for other passages. In 1939 it was estimated that there was less shipping on the Irish Register than there was Irish-owned shipping in the port of Dublin alone in 1900. Only in 1941, at a time of grave national need, was a state-owned Irish Shipping Company set up: and then it was an auxiliary rather than a substitute for private interests.

If 'Eire' remained dependent on Britain for overseas trade, Irish investors remained dependent on the British stockmarket. Here



again such government interference as there was (and this was mainly limited to the I.C.C.) was aimed to supplement rather than to replace foreign external investment. In May 1940 the British Fabian, John Hawkins, estimated that total Irish investments abroad amounted to £300,000,000, that bank assets held in Ireland were less than three fifths of the assets held outside Ireland and that Irish-held investments in foreign government stocks were eleven and a half times the value of investments in Irish government stocks.

By then the government had taken two steps beyond the I.C.C. in extending its control over credit. The more notable was the Banking Commission of which the majority's findings (1938) were summed up by the practical Paddy the Cope: 'Any Jew miser could have told them how in five minutes'. More immediately significant was Lemass's insurance legislation (1936 and 1938) which organized the registration of foreign insurance companies and the control and then the temporary nationalization of internal ones, and which provided conditions for a later expansion of the former's activities.

The war saw a final act of financial control. The Central Bank Act (1942) put into effective operation the demands of the Banking Commission. The Central Bank took over the note-issuing powers of the Currency Commission and was given powers to control (the hereby-licensed) banks through possession of their deposits. But the latter powers were held in reserve. In any case the continuing and effective foreign investment powers of other business institutions and of the government and the continuing issuing (in effect) of British currency, combined to make them only marginally effective.

Even the graziers had their earlier grievances reduced after the Trade Agreement. Though de-rating was shelved, the government grants tended increasingly to fall impartially upon all farmers. The Land Commission's divisive powers were limited by red tape in practice. With the Emergency, the one agricultural commodity imported in large quantities by the U.K. was store cattle (though for one year (1940-41) their imports were restricted). On the other hand, compulsory tillage was far more burdensome for the small farmer than for the large farmer who had plenty of usually good land that he could use without worrying too much about the fertilizer shortage.

It is, then, scarcely surprising that Thomas Johnson estimated, in 1943, that after eleven years of Fianna Fail power 0.5% of the population of 'Eire' owned 50% of its capital. Nor need we won-

der that the much more conservative Felim O'Briain, O.F.M., could estimate later that in 1943 also 0.5% of the population received 8.0% of the national income and 16% received 33% thereof.

This social conservatism was reflected in the denominational divisions of society. The 1946 Census reported that whereas non-Catholic urban families represented 8% of all urban families, they represented still 22% of the professional-manager-employer class.

In these circumstances, Fine Gael's decline was natural. In 1938 it stood aside to let Fianna Fail deal with the menace from a growing Labour Party. When in 1943 it again fought a general election in force, it did so on a programme of a 'National Government'. It was defeated decisively.

But the final sign of the transfer of bourgeois allegiance to Fianna Fail was to come in February 1948. William Dwyer, of Sunbeam Wolsey, was an unsuccessful Fine Gael Candidate in June 1943. From 1944 to 1946, he was an Independent Business T.D. before resigning, the better to look after his company. After the election of 1948 he telegrammed de Valera 'I hope and pray that you can form a government... You are the one leader in Ireland that can see us through the present crisis'. Fianna Fail was now quite respectable.

## V

### *The bureaucracy*

In 1932, the civil service was overborn. Its views had coincided generally with those of Cumann na nGaedhael and its supporters. What was more, the new government's economy drive reduced the salaries of higher as well as lower civil servants. Faced with these facts many of the remaining veterans of the Union regime resigned their offices.

The clash between Ministers and bureaucrats was seen most vividly in the Department of Local Government. Here in practice the civil servants had directed policy since the founding of the Saorstát. However, the new Minister, Sean T. O'Ceallaigh, had ideas of his own. From 1932 to 1935 he forced the democratization of Irish local government. He also experimented unsuccessfully in relaxing the stringency of the centralized local Appoint-

ments Board. Against both these the civil service fought a running battle. Finally in December 1936 E. P. McCarron, Permanent Secretary to the Department was eased out of his post.

In fact, the struggle had been in form only. O'Ceallaigh's local appointments policy involved merely giving the choice of three names rather than one to the local council concerned. He made no attempt to set up any system of councils more local than those of the county. He suspended authorities and postponed local elections more blatantly than his Cumann na nGaedhael predecessors. And his housing schemes, being unsupported by any theory of loyalty, tended to isolate their individual beneficiaries, leaving them thus prey for the bureaucrat.

The policy of Fianna Fail, being that of a pragmatic, reformist administration aiming to benefit the workers without strengthening them, necessitated the growth of the civil service in power and in size. From 1932 to 1937 its members rose by 3,000 and government expenditure by 25%. In 1935 alone, the members of statutory rules and orders exceeded the total of the years 1922-1932. From 1935 to 1955 the civil service numbers rose by 50%.

Further, between 1932 and 1943, the numbers of state-sponsored bodies proliferated. They were created to direct all sorts of matters, mainly economic, though within the capitalist framework. The included Bord na Mona (the Turf Board), The Sugar Company (the one expropriation of a private business and that a foreign one) and the Cement Company (all were formed in 1934), Aer Lingus (the Civil Aviation Company, 1936) Bord Failte (The Tourist Board: 1939) and (under the stress of the emergency) the Irish Shipping Company (1941). There were also the tiny Monarchana Acoil na hEireann (Industrial Alcohol Co.: 1938) and Mianrai Teoranta (to exploit the few Irish minerals, 1940). Such bodies encouraged a further move of the entrepreneurial Irish towards the state service. They offered power and rewards comparable to no private businessman's outside the great Anglo-Irish trading firms.

The Emergency further strengthened the state bureaucratic authority. O'Ceallaigh left the Department of Local Government for that of Finance. His successor (1939-1941), Patrick Rutledge, was less formidable. He was persuaded to remove the local council's powers, apart from patronage and rating, giving them to County Managers appointed by the government. This formalized and extended the Cumann na nGaedhael practice as regards administration of the boroughs. It occurred one year before the first county elections on the democratic franchise. At parish level he

and his successor, MacEntee, stood resolutely against any extension or formalization of the powers of the new parish councils.

At the same time the measures of the military Emergency effectively ended the rule of law. And in 1942 the government was given extra-parliamentary powers to levy or suspend taxes. These increased ministerial rather than bureaucratic powers, but such increased powers tends to mean in practice that more power must be delegated to the civil service.

## VI

### *The Catholic Church and distributism*

The 1930s saw the spheres of influence of bourgeois and bureaucrat increase: that of the Church remain the same. Fianna Fail's victory was a defeat for the Catholic hierarchy as much as for its allies. Unlike them, the nature of its defeat forced it into the position where it had to work to maintain its place in the triumvirate.

Absolutely, its position was unchanged. From 1932 to 1948 (with a brief interval from 1939 to 1940, when de Valera himself held the post) Tomas O'Deirg (or Thomas Derrig) was Minister for Education. The new minister was the ex-Headmaster of Ballina Technical School, who had been sacked for refusing to take the oath to the Saorstat. He was now appointed to maintain the support of the teachers. In this he was unsuccessful; the advice of the I.N.T.O. was ignored on most matters. The teachers received pay cuts in 1932, which were never adequately restored. O'Deirg attacked the women teachers first (1934) by banning their marriage and four years later by enforcing on them a retiring age earlier than that for men.

In general educational policy, O'Deirg has three achievements to his credit. He increased the grant to technical schools. In 1934 he introduced a transport subsidy for the carriage of Protestant children to their denominational national schools (though this strengthened religious sectarianism). In 1937, he introduced a free schoolbooks scheme for needy children. He made an attempt to create circumstances for a new improvement in teaching in a School Attendance Bill in 1942 (though his real reason may have been to reduce the numbers educated in British schools). The decisive clause of this Bill was declared unconstitutional by the Su-



preme Court because it interfered with the parental right to educate.

Apart from these actions, O'Deirg's education policy amounted to little more than pious aspiration. With the support of a Departmental Committee (1936) he refused to extend the national school-leaving age to 16 years, though this reform was put into effect by several local councils. It was under his regime also that the state of primary school buildings became a major public scandal. Hawkins estimates that in 1937 2,400 school buildings were either obsolete, verminous or otherwise defective. In December 1941 T. J. O'Connell declared in the Seanad: 'In the majority of schools in rural Ireland, the sanitary conditions are unsuitable and dangerous to health'. This emphasized the inability of the system to educate the 14-16 year-olds. The basic cause for its arose from the need of the school managers to pay one third of the cost of all school repair or renewal. O'Deirg was unwilling to change this system. So were the managers themselves; they feared a loss of their power. The Minister also rejected demands for an advisory Council of Education to strengthen parental power formally without hurting clerical authority (which would, indeed, have bolstered the latter).

It must be said that in education as in other matters Fianna Fail reflected popular opinion. The well-established power of the school managers was backed by the national poverty that created a necessity to fight for survival not conducive to educational enthusiasm. Even so when in 1935 Dr Kinnane, the Bishop of Waterford, directed the sacking of a national teacher, Frank Edwards, for membership of the Republican Congress, there was greater reaction than there would have been thirty years later.

The authority of the censorship was most notable at this period. In 1933 Shaw's *Black Girl in Search of God* was banned because its woodcuts showed the girl as being naked. In 1942 Dr Halliday Sutherland's *Laws of Life* was banned, despite its possession of the imprimatur of the Archbishop of Westminster. Later in the year there was banned the reportage of the language of *The Tailor and Anstey* that showed that what one could hear anywhere without moral harm counted as obscene reading.

But this activity was caused less directly by the clergy than by bigoted laity, headed by the Fianna Fail leader, Professor Magennis. Admittedly these people did act in the name of Christianity and with clerical blessing. Even so the Church itself could act with less fanaticism than its supporters. In 1942 Maynooth seminary bought a painting that the Dublin Corporation had hesitated



about buying lest it be 'blasphemous'.

The outstanding revelation of Catholic power in Ireland appeared in the 1937 Constitution. The non-denominationalism of the Saorstat Constitution was here replaced by a definite Christianity that gave a 'special position' to the Catholic Church. Of more importance was its definite prohibition of divorce.

But how little that meant was shown in the fact that the Courts of Law, when examining it the better to delineate clearly the area covered by 'faith and morals', were careful not to be guided only by clerical opinion. In 1942 Judge George Gavan Duffy laid down (*Schlegel v. Corcoran and Cross*) that any genuinely-held religious belief might be maintained even to inconvenience (legally) another person. Hunt's case (1943) resulted in legal recognition of civil marriages. In the School Attendance Bill case, the Supreme Court declared that the parental right to educate their children was not limited to deciding the latter's religion.

The essentially lay nature of this power encouraged reaction to it in sees where clerical control had been comparatively lax. This change was perhaps most notable in Dublin, where on November 6th 1940 Dr John Charles McQuaid became Archbishop. He moved to establish his personal authority throughout his diocese. He has excluded from it the full organization of *Muintir na Tire* (though he has allowed an auxiliary guild thereof to be set up there). He has endeavoured to encourage the separation of Dublin charities on sectarian lines. He enforced strictly limitations on the right of Catholics to attend the Anglo-Irish Dublin University which he considered to be a major centre of Protestant influence over Irish Catholic youth. He has controlled firmly questions of church architecture and culture. He has streamlined the administration of the Catholic charities in the Archdiocese. Despite genuine shyness, he has (like his contemporary prelates) participated wherever possible in Advisory Commissions on government policy and in advising on such social unrests as strikes.

But such authority could only be developed on the basis of a definite justifying social theory. Such was Distributism, based on the platitudes of Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* as developed in the 1920s in Britain by Belloc and Chesterton and at Maynooth by Dr Peter Coffey. Its basic idea was, in the pure sense, reactionary. Whereas Socialism accepts the consolidation of capital, Distributism opposes it wherever possible in the name of the small owner-employer. Where such an ideal is not possible, the productive unit should be run by a co-operative. Credit must be controlled by the state to prevent private capital accumulation. The dynamic for

this is the spirit of employer-worker co-operation inspired by the Catholic Church. The question of power is nowhere mentioned.

In 1931 this rather woolly theory received stimulus from Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno*. In this, the Corporate State appeared as the ideal method for enforcing the national class harmony under which distributism might work. In Ireland the principles of the new Corporatism (or 'Vocationalism') included also the Council of Education, a system of parish councils (both of which meant in the immediate situation, augmented clerical power) and children's allowances to protect the family. Abroad, the theory meant general support for the Mediterranean dictators, though the strength of the corollary to this, anti-Communism, varied between left and right.

Because of clerical determination the ideology is the most developed form of Populism that has yet appeared. As such it developed extremities. Right-wing 'Vocationalism' appeared as the fascism of the blueshirts, and later organizations, including the Irish-Ireland, Ailtiri na hAiseirighe. It tended to lay greater stress on the state than on the smaller units, demanded the constitutionalizing of Vocational Organizations, the ending of 'divisive' Proportional Representation and bewailed the party system. Its most extreme proponent was Fr Denis Fahey, who combined it with anti-Semitism; his books had the Imprimatur of the Bishop of Cork, Dr Daniel Cohalan, and Dr Jeremiah Kinnane, Bishop of Waterford, and later Archbishop of Cashel. The left-wing Vocationalists tended to anticipate the practices of modern Social Democracy, although they were rather more libertarian in that they always emphasized the importance of the small unit. Fr Hayes (admirer both of the British Labour Party and of Mussolini) is an example (he was actually another of Kinnane's protégés). This wing included such theoreticians as Fr Edward Coyne, who praised Corporate society (as opposed to the Corporate State). Among these Dr John Dignan, Bishop of Clonfert, proposed in October 1944 a social welfare scheme run on Vocationalist lines, but otherwise anticipating modern European practice and, even today, well ahead of Irish policy.

Vocationalism could appear as an expansion of Sinn Féin; most notably in its mistrust of the banks. But its very definite social ideas appealed naturally less to the propertyless than to men of small property, the classes from which the Church draws the bulk of its novitiates. Denominational and Catholic bodies supported Vocationalism. Of the press, the Catholic magazines, the *Irish Independent* and, after Moran's death, the *Leader*. But most Voca-

tionalist theory appeared in a new monthly magazine, *Hibernia*, founded in 1937.

The vocationalist parties were Fine Gael (even when purged of its blueshirt crudities) and, especially, Clann na Talmhan. Labour was, naturally, less enthusiastic. But in 1934 it declared its Christian principles. One of its T.D.s, Michael Keyes, was prominent in the Christian Front and it later published a pamphlet eulogizing Salazar. Its more general policy was to press only for those aspects of Distributism (such as social credit control, children's allowances and Dignan's Social Welfare Scheme) that were compatible with working class interests.

Fianna Fail was also unenthusiastic. De Valera could praise sometimes Italy and Portugal; he introduced a parody of vocationalism into the electoral procedure for his new Seanad; he regretted that it was not nearer the ideal. But he opposed consistently the vocationalist demands. Parish councils were not encouraged until the Emergency; children's allowances were not initiated; a Council of Education was refused. In foreign affairs, he supported the League of Nations' sanctions against Italy and refused to recognize Franco as ruler of Spain until 1939. But in the January of that year the appearance of the small farmer Clann na Talmhan stimulated him into more positive action. He set up a committee to investigate Vocational Representation. This committee reported in August 1944 when the pioneer of Corporatism, Mussolini, was discredited completely and his theories were being called in question more than before. Its majority report was unsigned by any of its labour representatives. Fianna Fail was able to dismiss it contemptuously.

For the contradiction in Vocationalism was this: its main support lay in the small property-owners, but the social welfare schemes necessary to win the propertyless could not work without either Socialist revolution or the great expansion of Government spending and bureaucracy that has been noted. In addition, the small farmers disliked the bourgeoisie and were exploited by them through the market and credit system. Such real class differences could not be overcome merely by Vocationalism. Nonetheless, the ideas therein and the pressures behind them would play a decisive part in the years after 1943.

## CHAPTER SIX

# THE RUPTURED REVOLT 1943-1957

*...‘Upon the stage of universal history all great events and personalities reappear... On the first occasion they appear as tragedy; on the second as farce.’*

K. Marx: *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

### I

#### *Respublica ex machina*

In the general election of June 1943 the Irish political spectrum underwent a change, such as appeared to anticipate its complete revision. In the new Dail, Fianna Fail held sixty-seven seats out of one hundred and thirty-eight. It was now clearly holding the constitutional centre against the right-wing Fine Gael, with thirty-two seats and thirty-two Deputies who were pledged to achieve an official Irish Republic. Independents held the balance.

The government depended on the differences between opponents. It was confident both that the Republicans would never put it out to put Cosgrave in, and that Fine Gael was equally against the Republicans. Fianna Fail itself was now a party that could claim justly to represent ‘all the nation’. It was now fully conservative. However, if need be, it could refurbish the forms of its old Jacobinism.

Of Fine Gael at this time, it might be said that, whereas Fianna Fail trimmed to suit the electoral wind, it trimmed despite it. Its front bench losses had been proportionate to its overall weakening. What was more, in January 1944, Cosgrave would resign the party’s presidency in favour of General Richard Mulcahy. This represented a new error; Cosgrave had had sufficient personal popularity to compensate for his conservatism: Mulcahy represented



for too many the full crudity of the Irish reaction and had detractors within his party. What was more he had lost his seat in 1943 and would regain it only in May 1944.

In these circumstances, the parties of the future seemed to be on the left. Such a trend was in keeping with the contemporary radicalism in world politics. In Northern Ireland a new Cabinet included an apparent Socialist, Harry Midgely. In Britain, the Coalition was preparing mildly progressive peace-time policies. Russia was a heroic liberator even, to some extent, in 'Eire'.

But the Republican opposition was divided. Seventeen of its seats were held by the Labour Party, fourteen by Clann na Talmhan and the remaining one by the young Monetary Reformer, Oliver Flanagan. Admittedly, Clann na Talmhan talked vaguely of 'National Government' and Labour proclaimed its readiness to ally with it (though not with Fianna Fail or Fine Gael). The clear demands of each party were also similar. But Labour's state capitalism and Clann na Talmhan's Vocationalism were different developments of Republican Populism and provided an immediate insuperable obstacle to a Republican Front.

The situation was complicated further by the divisions existing within both parties. Within Labour, the Larkin-O'Brien feud encouraged O'Brien's backing a breakaway National Labour Party under the I.T.G.W.U.'s T.D., James Everett. Within Clann na Talmhan the difference, revealing itself less promptly, but going more deeply, was between the small farmers and the larger ones.

What was more Fianna Fail was not prepared to succeed only by its opponents' errors. The price freeze was strengthened. Sean MacEntee continued his welfare reforms, amongst which the introduction of Children's Allowances removed a major point of agreement between the Labour Party and Clann na Talmhan.

And two pieces of luck befell the government.

The rate of inflation for 1942-1943 was reduced for 1943-1944.

In February 1944 the U.S.A., supported by the U.K., sent an ultimatum. It denounced Irish neutrality as a pro-Axis front and demanded the expulsion from 'Eire' of the German and Japanese Ambassadors thereunto. De Valera refused to accept this and was supported by all opposition parties. The Irish Army was mobilized and bridges to Northern Ireland were mined against invasion thence. The Anglo-American bluff was called. Neither U.K. nor U.S.A. were prepared really to divert forces from Europe; they were content to break every severable link between the U.K. and 'Eire'. But de Valera was now able to appear as the recognized



leader of a united people.

And in May he was defeated on a Bill to co-ordinate transport. He appealed to the country once again. Now Fianna Fail was the only possible single party government. Many former opposition supporters abstained from voting. De Valera won an over-all majority on the lowest vote since his abstentionist days.

In May 1945 came the end of the war in Europe. Accordingly the government ended most of the Emergency Powers, though not the Offences Against the State Act nor, indeed, the Emergency that justified them. But in 1947 the Oireachtas did extend a measure of senatorial control over delegated legislation.

In June 1945 O'Ceallaigh was elected to succeed Dr Douglas Hyde as President. His successor at the Department of Finance, Frank Aiken, carried out a strongly deflationary policy as advised by the civil servants. But he could not prevent the initiation of many long overdue schemes.

Aer Lingus expanded its services; in 1947 its airport at Rineanna Co. Clare, became the custom-free port of Shannon. The Irish harbour system was reorganized and Irish shipping was encouraged to modernize itself, with especial attention to the Atlantic carried trade. The third great hydro-electric power scheme, that of Lough Erne, was carried out, with the help of Northern Ireland, between 1946 and 1952. A plan to expand turf production was put into operation. Another scheme was initiated to supply cheap electricity to the rural areas. Other Acts were passed to stimulate land drainages and egg production. Tourism was encouraged. MacEntee continued his health schemes and crowned them with a Health Act in 1947. And between 1945 and 1948, 'Eire' voted £7,500,000 as aid to war-stricken Europe.

Such measures were either for the long term or for pure expenditure. They were financed partly by an immediate post-war boom: partly out of the assets created by favourable war-time trade balances. Despite its efforts, the government could not increase exports even to the post-war level. From 1947, the volume of imports grew steadily. Inflation continued. The dreadful winter of 1946-1947 involved a reduction of British fuel supplies to Ireland. A large number of strikes followed over the year. Finally in October an emergency budget imposed price control.

Government popularity was hurt also by the after-effects of its firm policy against the I.R.A. In December 1944 Charles Kerins, one of its prominent young men, had been executed for murder on what many felt was doubtful evidence. In May 1946 the I.R.A. ex Chief of Staff, Sean McCaughey, died on hunger strike.

At the same time a series of scandals shook Fianna Fail. As early as September 1942 Sean O'Faolain could write in his magazine *The Bell*: 'The word is – Racket. It is flying from lip to lip.' Now good reasons for the word appeared. A court case involving corrupt practices in the 1944 Seanad election led to the reform of the electoral system used therein. In March 1945 a government Deputy was found guilty of breaking the Emergency Powers Acts. A leading supporter was found to be involved innocently with smugglers. In July 1946 Dr Francis Ward (now Minister-designate for the proposed Department of Health) was discovered to have connections with a firm of bacon-curers who seemed unduly evasive about their books. In October 1947 the climax came. Lemass and Boland were accused of conniving at a breach of the Control of Manufactures Acts in regard to Locke's whiskey distillery, Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath. Although they were cleared of the charge the case reflected a general dissatisfaction with the post-war appearance in 'Eire' of alien buyers of native industries.

And there were no countervailing developments in constitutional or foreign affairs. In the first, de Valera's explanations of the position of 'Eire' as an informal republic within the British Commonwealth merely encouraged dissatisfaction with his 'dictionary Republic'. Northern Ireland (now a truly 'uneconomic farm') was encouraged to remain loyal to Britain by application thither of the new 'Welfare State' that 'Eire' could not match.

In international affairs 'Eire's' continuing refusal to give the U.S.S.R. diplomatic recognition was countered by the latter maintaining a veto against admission to U.N.O.

But was there any alternative to Fianna Fail?

Fine Gael was in a pathetic state. Between 1944 and 1948 it did not win a single bye-election and in several it did not enter a candidate. It still urged a National government, denounced bureaucracy and havered on the government's anti-I.R.A. policy. Its one original proposal was Mulcahy's suggestion in November 1944 of an Anglo-Irish alliance; that had to be abandoned swiftly. It gained little new support though in 1947 a prolonged strike of teachers some of them to move to back its support.

The Republican opposition was a little better. The parties therein did win occasional bye-elections. And Labour and Clann na Talmhan (now led by Joseph Blowick) carried on desultory negotiations for an agreement on social welfare reforms. But these came to nothing. What was more Cogan and his associates left Clann na Talmhan, and the split within the Labour Party was duplicated in the trade union movement in 1945.

Then in May 1946 the number of Republican Parties was augmented. A group of I.R.A. ex-internees and members of dead Republican parties joined with disillusioned Fianna Fail and Labour Party supporters to make up a new 'Clann na Poblachta' (Republican Brotherhood). This was led by Sean MacBride and organized by the former Fianna Fail supporter, Noel Hartnett. Its programme was one of Republican Jacobinism pushed as far as possible without becoming Socialist. It appealed to many who despaired of the existing Republican left.

In October 1947 the new party won seats in two bye-elections. De Valera went to the country in February 1948. Fianna Fail lost its overall majority but remained the largest single group in the Oireachtas. It prepared to continue in office. At this point stepped in the Providence that waits on fools, drunkards and Fine Gael.

A number of Mulcahy's opponents within that party had seen the idea of coalition as a way to keep him from the Taoiseach's office. Amongst these was a certain Sir John Esmonde, once noted as the youngest M.P. in the Irish Parliamentary Party. He had suggested to MacBride that only a National government could overcome British opposition to an open Irish Republic. When after the 1948 general election, Clann na Poblachta held only ten seats, it was eager to accept the proposal. The other Republican parties had never had much understanding of class, and were now desperate for power enough to ally even with Fine Gael. Thus de Valera was ousted in favour of a new 'Inter-Party' government.

The new Taoiseach was neither Mulcahy nor Esmonde but John A. Costello, a distinguished constitutional lawyer. He had served as Cosgrave's Attorney-General, and would have probably returned to that post under any purely Fine Gael government. His forensic skill is undoubted and, as Taoiseach, he left his mark in the sphere of the Department of Justice, itself placed carefully under non-lawyers. But his political qualities were less certain and he held his new position as the honest broker between the claim of stronger men. Such a system worked well under normal circumstances; crises caused its collapse.

The party leaders divided the posts as follows; Norton, as leader of the second largest group, was Tanaiste (Deputy Taoiseach) and Minister for the new (1947) Department of Social Welfare; Mulcahy was Minister for Education; MacBride, Minister for External Affairs; Joseph Blowick (of Clann na Talmhan), Minister for Lands; Everett, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs; the Independent, Dillon, represented the government's non-party support as Minister for Agriculture. Esmonde received the reversion of the

Attorney-Generalship; he was never to get the actual office and would retire from politics in 1951.

An immediate ten-point programme was announced. It appeared a Republicanism differing in detail only from that of Fianna Fail. It included vague promises of increased production, taxes on 'unreasonable' profits, reduced living costs, a cheap housing drive, a Council of Education, a national drainage plan, a social security scheme, an emasculated means test, an anti-tuberculosis drive and the removal of certain Fianna Fail indirect taxes. For the rest, it was agreed tacitly that government policy would be worked out by each supporting party maintaining its separate programme and pressing it through its Ministerial representatives.

Such a compromise could not satisfy the militant elements among the supporters of the Republican left. The I.R.A. began to be reorganized in 1948. From 1949 a revitalized Sinn Fein was working more closely with it than ever before. In 1948 the C.P.I. was revived for 'Eire' as the Irish Workers' League.

Yet Inter-Partyism seemed to work at first. Norton streamlined welfare benefits. Labour's successive Ministers for Local Government, Murphy and Keyes, revived and continued pre-war housing policies. Dr Noel Browne, Clann na Poblachta Minister for Health, organized the eradication of tuberculosis. MacBride augmented Irish diplomatic representation abroad. To help pay for all this Patrick MacGilligan, now Minister for Finance, initiated an economy drive. Dillon expanded the original drainage proposal into a land reclamation scheme, abolished compulsory tillage and prepared a plan for parish co-operation. Blowick revived and expanded forestry. Daniel Morrissey, Fine Gael's ex-Labour Minister for Industry and Commerce, struggled to expand sales of Irish produced goods at home and abroad and in 1950 set up an Industrial Development Authority.

In external affairs, the greatest achievement of the first Inter-Party government was MacBride's insistence on Ireland's military non-commitment, even (and in June 1949) as against the anti-Communism of N.A.T.O.

MacBride's reasons for this were not ideological. However, they had greater practical political influence than ideological arguments would have done. He was not prepared to accept the territorial status quo involved in acceptance of the N.A.T.O. Charter, while Britain ruled Northern Ireland.

To regain the latter, all Irish parties combined in a propaganda campaign against partition. In 1949, a special Irish News Agency was established for this purpose. Ireland's delegates to the new



Council of Europe took every opportunity to raise the issue. Browne appointed a Northern Ireland woman M.P., Mrs Eileen Hickie, to the new National Health Council. Partition remained.

There were reasons for this apart from Northern Irish Protestant fears of Catholicism and low pensions. One was the essentially governmental and political nature of the Anti-Partition Campaign. No appeal was made directly to the Protestants of the north-east that they oppose their colonial status. And the ruling elites of both areas could act together for practical purposes. In 1950 they reached agreement over the latter part of the Erne scheme. The next year they shared in the division of the cross-border Great Northern Railway. MacBride offered an all-Ireland free trade area. Few Irish bourgeois interests wanted such a thing. It remained uncreated.

And the Ulster Unionists were able to bolster themselves politically. In February 1949 they regained a number of lost seats in a general election after a campaign of Carsonite proportions. Later that year the U.K.'s Ireland Act formulated Northern Ireland's status quo as alterable only with its parliament's assent.

The excuse for these measures was Costello's attack on the External Relations Act, that kept 'Eire' in the British Commonwealth in August and September 1948. This was followed up by MacBride's formal repeal of the Act and the resultant inauguration of a Republic of Ireland outside the Commonwealth on April 18th 1949. This had not been promised in the government programme. However, it occurred as a logical result of the Government's political composition. Not only were nearly half the Ministers avowed Republicans, but many Fine Gael leaders (notably the Minister for Justice, General Sean MacEoin and though less outspokenly, the Taoiseach) had concluded that the 'Dictionary Republic' had to be formalized. The only possible way to do this was the one which was followed.

The inauguration of the Republic has been claimed to have 'taken the gun out of Irish politics'. More truly it sent that weapon northwards. Neither Sinn Fein nor the I.R.A. were appeased. And in 1950 a former Clann na Poblachta T.D., Peadar Cowan, announced his intention of leading a private army over the border.

Another economic flaw was now appearing in Inter-Partyism. The government had carried out the more definite parts of its policy. It had been encouraged by the Marshal Plan loan to Ireland that began in June 1948. Most of this money was placed in a special fund. But much of it financed Dillon's agricultural schemes. And Norton was encouraged by it to be preparing a major social



welfare reform when the government fell in 1951.

But without a major change in the form of society, such policies had to be paid for in trade terms. Morrissey could not increase exports or production at the same rate as imports. His biggest achievement was a trade agreement with the U.K., which failed to overcome the latter's price guarantees to its own farmers and which Britain could not itself honour anyway.

Furthermore, the U.K. devalued the pound on September 18th 1949. Ireland followed suit rather than break the financial link. As a result Ireland had either to be supplied from the U.K. or pay increased prices. By 1951 it was spending three times the dollars it earned, as against its spending twice the number it earned in 1938.

As a result of all this the government had to recall some £30,000,000 of external holdings. For the first time, in 1951, most Irish public assets were held in Ireland.

In August 1950 there was a bad harvest. In November bread rationing had to be revived. A fuel shortage followed.

To allay unrest new price controls were imposed.

Two political crises occurred also. The first (the so-called 'Battle of Baltinglass') was relatively minor, concerning the traditional spoils system in the Department of Posts and Telegraphs. However, it lost the Government the support of the Independent Farmer, Cogan.

The second crisis arose in February 1951 when the Minister for Health attempted to operate Part III of the 1947 Health Act (which dealt with free health schemes for mothers and children). The Catholic Bishops opposed this and all the other Ministers accepted their judgment. Browne resigned from government and party. He was supported definitely only by two other T.D.s and Clann na Poblachta's Chairman, Noel Hartnett.

Finally there came the breakaway of two of Clann na Talmhan's Munster Deputies. None of these had been given a Ministerial post. Moreover their dairy-farming constituents wanted aid to solve the economic problems caused by the previous year's bad harvest.

The dissidents threatened to ally with Fianna Fail to defeat the agricultural estimates. Costello forestalled this by having the Dail dissolved. A general election was fought in May.

Fianna Fail campaigned against Inter-Party economics. It did not convince. Prices had not risen sufficiently quickly to cause major privations; in fact, between 1947 and 1950 they had risen less than they had in the U.K. Between 1946 and 1951 the population had increased for the first time in a century. Unemploy-

ment was at its lowest since the revision of the register in 1934. The party's one definite point was the increasing trade imbalance (it was to reach £123,000,000 for the current year). Not only was this an indefinite evil for most people, but Fianna Fail's promises did not seem different enough from those of the Coalition to be able to solve it.

Thus the party only gained one seat. However it was returned to power backed by Browne, two of his allies and Cogan.

But this overall result concealed more important changes. The only losers in the election were Clann na Poblachta and the reunited Labour Party. This was especially notable in Dublin City where opinion backed Browne and Fianna Fail as a reaction against the Coalition's surrender to clerical prejudice. Fine Gael's support held in and around Dublin (after all, it tended naturally rather to approve Browne's fall). In addition, Inter-Party agricultural policy and Republicanism gave both Fine Gael and the Clann na Talmhan's Connacht rump increased rural support. This Fine Gael revival was further emphasized the next year when it was joined by Flanagan at the same time as Dillon, and his supporter, Charles Fagan, re-entered.

The new government was the last to be guided within the general petty bourgeois Republicanism that Griffith had initiated. From it, enough had already been extracted to make such remaining ideals as currency reforms by themselves as inadequate for a political programme as they were obnoxious to the bourgeoisie. Many were trying to develop from them. Of the previous attempts, 'Workers' Republicanism' had been shelved as its advocates heard the call of office and conscious Vocationalism had been for most too compromised with Fascism. Now Noel Browne was trying to re-work out the left-ward development of Republicanism. However it was the bourgeois need to revise Republicanism in a rightist form that was justified by events.

These appeared as a series of economic crises. Early in the life of the new government the U.S.A. announced the ending of its Marshall Aid-subsidized European Co-operative Administration. At the same time, it called in its loans to Cold War neutrals. De Valera and Aiken, now Minister for External Affairs, restated Irish neutrality. In January 1952 Ireland was left owing the U.S.A. £3,200,000 on top of its usual dollar deficit, eighteen months before it expected that that amount would fall due.

This was a justification for an austerity budget the following April. In it, MacEntee, again Minister for Finance, increased taxes and removed or reduced food subsidies. The Act was carried

with aid of the government's independent supporters. As a result the cost of living rose more steeply than for any year since 1943. Unemployment also rose. But it reduced imports and helped stabilize the trade balance. Accordingly it encouraged greater domestic capital formation, slightly increased production and thus a new decline in unemployment figures by 1954.

The last development was not very much. Between 1950 and 1957 the average rate of economic growth was 1% per annum: less than half the contemporary average for other states in the O.E.E.C. The proportion of the Irish G.N.P. devoted to fixed capital formation remained less than it was in similar states.

What was more, the common currency with the U.K. encouraged the maintenance of the primacy of the essentially one-sided Anglo-Irish trade. In 1953 a new agreement was made therein improving the terms on which Irish livestock was imported, but leaving the situation doubtful on other matters.

There was one bright spot. In 1951 the Inter-Party government had initiated and Fianna Fail had carried through legislation setting up a special body to encourage the American trade: Coras Trachtala Teoranta. Aided by post-devaluation circumstances and new American investment expansion in Europe this achieved an increase in trade with the U.S.A. This helped both to pay off the debt and to establish a favourable overall trade balance by 1956.

In various spheres of internal affairs, the 1951 Fianna Fail government carried out important reforms. Reorganization was begun in the Irish fisheries. A move was made to expand industry in the under-developed areas through a body, An Foras Tionnscoil. Another flash of Republicanism was Lemass' Restrictive Practices Act. Dr Ryan's Social Welfare Act was a watered-down version of Norton's project. Adoption was legalized. Above all, Ryan passed his Health Act after the Catholic bishops had been outmanoeuvred.

Government firmness against the Church contributed to a decline in cross-border hostility. In fact, however, this took place on Ulster Unionist terms.

This was the more objectionable in that the British welfare benefits had not changed the nature of Unionism. In 1946, the Northern Irish Franchise Act further limited its local government franchise at a time when Britain was democratizing its own. In 1954, the Unionists passed a Flags and Emblems (Display) Act, banning the appearance of the Irish Tricolour.

The Republican movement (including both Sinn Fein and the I.R.A.) was stimulated by such activities. In March 1952, Sinn

Fein announced a new political plan of campaign. The leadership was now in the hands of a triumvirate: Anthony Magan, the Chief of Staff of the I.R.A., Patrick MacLogan, President of Sinn Fein and Thomas MacCurtain. The 'three Macs', as they were called, though more active than their predecessors, led the movement too cautiously for many. As a result they were overtaken by a more radical movement.

In November 1953 a Co. Tyrone I.R.A. leader, Liam Kelly, broke with the official movement and formed a group 'Saor Uladh' (Free Ulster). He was elected to the Northern Ireland Parliament (albeit as an Abstentionist) and proclaimed his recognition of the Oireachtas, both against Sinn Fein principles. In December he established 'Fianna Uladh' (Warriors of Ulster) but was subsequently imprisoned for 'seditious statements' made in his election campaign.

Sinn Fein was stimulated into acting. In March 1954 it ran a candidate in a bye-election in Aiken's constituency of Co. Louth.

This bye-election was one of a group decisive for the de Valera government. After the results, it found that it had won only a third of all fought since 1951. A general election was fought in May.

This contest was fought as before between Fianna Fail and the Coalition parties. Among them, Fine Gael was now paramount. It had had the sense to elect Costello as its parliamentary leader whilst keeping the less flexible Mulcahy to inspire the faithful as Party President. This dual leadership enabled Fine Gael to give an effective impression (without any definite schemes) of a move to the left. In turn, this inspired the reinvigoration of constituency organization. The other parties seemed content to follow. Much of Clann na Poblachta's support was now backing Sinn Fein and Saor Uladh, or, if more respectable, such right-wing fringe parties as the Young Ireland Party (1953) or the National Action of Joseph Hanley Clann na Talmhan had been completely overshadowed by Dillon. Labour was more fortunate in possessing a more politically critical rank and file than the other parties; to appease it Norton had to insist that the Coalition add economic planning to its programme.

The election result was decisive. Fianna Fail held only sixty-five seats: less than at any time since 1932. Fine Gael's seats rose to fifty and, for the first time since 1933, it had as many seats in Dublin City as Fianna Fail. The Labour Party was restored to its 1951 position. Clann na Talmhan lost seats to Fine Gael. Clann na Poblachta gained one seat (and hence a 50% increase in its



Dail numbers).

The second Inter-Party government had the same programme (or lack thereof) as the first, plus the demand for a plan. To secure this, Norton was placed in charge of the Department of Industry and Commerce. But, to ally backwoods fears in Fine Gael, the new Minister for Finance was Gerard Sweetman. He was not only without ministerial experience but has been described as being so conservative that, if present at the creation of the world, he would have voted against it. Planning remained a paper ideal.

In these circumstances, government policies continued much as before. Norton carried out Fianna Fail's projected reform of the tourist trade. Dillon (again Minister for Agriculture) put into effect his predecessor's drainage scheme for the Midland areas and the long-standing proposals for an Agricultural Institute and the eradication of bovine T.B. Norton also expanded the powers of Coras Trachtala Teo. to enable it to deal with trade spheres outside the dollar area. The Labour Minister for Social Welfare, Brendan Corish, increased welfare benefits and reformed the law on workmen's compensation.

More distinct from Fianna Fail policies was Thomas O'Higgins junior's (son of Dr O'Higgins) co-operation with the Irish Medical Association in creating a Voluntary Health Insurance Scheme. Also different from the practice of the party that had been so long in government was Patrick O'Donnell's County and City Management Act which gave the local councils some say in the control of their managers.

In December 1955 Ireland was able at last to enter U.N.O.

But these policies were accompanied by the steady growth of the I.R.A.'s activities. Within a month of the general election an officer of this body, Joseph MacCriostal, made a successful raid on a British Army arms depot in Armagh. In July, Liam Kelly was elected to the Irish Seanad with Clann na Poblachta backing. I.R.A. and Fianna Uladh carried out rival activities along the border for two years. In August 1956, MacCriostal and his followers were expelled from the I.R.A. They allied with Fianna Uladh in opening a formal war on Northern Ireland on the 11th of November. The official I.R.A. attack began on the 12th December. The only real difference between the two groups was in the Fianna Uladh-MacCriostal readiness to use force and their unreadiness to accept the traditional taboos of Republicanism militancy. The differences of both with government and Fianna Fail were little more than the respectable bodies' betrayal of Republicanism. However, these were attractive to many and not without reason.



The government initiated its activity against the I.R.A. in October 1954 with a denunciation of that body by Liam Cosgrave, the Minister for External Affairs, and son of William. Then, for a year it did nothing until the Northern Ireland government began to blockade the border. In December 1955 it brought into force a number of sections of the Offences Against the State Act. Mention of Republican organizations was censored and the Irish Army combed for malcontents. This policy was backed by Fianna Fail and the Churches. But the government's need for Clann na Poblachta support made it hesitate to impose military law.

By August 1955 it was clear that government 'economic policy' had further reduced unemployment. But it had involved, also reducing foreign money reserves and increasing imports. Economic planning remained in the future.

Norton was unable to carry out his promise, unwilling to resign. His opportunism was tested accordingly. It responded magnificently. He began to encourage more than ever before Irish association with foreign capitalism. Individuals from the latter were urged to invest in Ireland. Plans were made to use foreign capital to carry out untaxed schemes: mines in Avoca, Co. Wicklow, and, more successfully, an oil refinery at Whitegate, Co. Cork. American investors were assured that their Irish holdings would be safe. In 1956 Norton ended the policy of giving special grants to factories in undeveloped areas: factories anywhere could receive the same. He hinted at repealing the Control of Manufactures legislation 'if necessary'.

But already a new crisis had hit Ireland. It had been protected against the general agricultural slump at the end of the Korean war by the British trade agreement of which the benefits had been augmented by the latter's ending of meat rationing. From November 1955, the market contracted rapidly.

Sweetman reacted promptly. He urged a national savings drive, restricted credit (for other than housing schemes) and imposed import levies and export rebates. The balance of payments deficit and the run on external reserves both declined. So did production. Unemployment and consumer prices showed a rise.

Planning was now clearly necessary. In October 1956 Costello announced a Plan for Production. It was based on six principles; increased agricultural investment, private investment in home products, high saving, high exports and co-operation. In its proposals it was more of a summary of the policies and promises of the previous thirty years of Republicanism than a plan for the future or indeed one that had much relevance to the present. How-

ever, its detailed proposals included schemes that would be carried out under a different scheme.

Within a month British troops landed at Suez. The resultant crisis hurt British and Irish oil imports. Irish production was cramped further. Unemployment swelled while relief was cut. Several firms went bankrupt.

In December two bye-elections showed increased support for Fianna Fail. In January MacBride and Clann na Poblachta, worried at the growing possibility of government coercion of the I.R.A., moved a censure motion. In February Costello obtained the dissolution of the fifteenth Dail.

In the general election campaign the only difference between government and Fianna Fail was that the latter was more openly ready to continue the policies that the former had initiated. The result reflected popular recognition of this. Fianna Fail was returned to power with a record number of seats, but on the lowest poll since 1944. I.R.A. and Fianna Uladh remained active. Four Sinn Fein candidates had been elected to Dail Eireann on an Abstentionist ticket.

Unemployment topped 70,000. Emigration figures were higher than at any time since the period of the Union. Abroad a European Free Trade Area was being developed among states of which the average G.N.P. was increasing at a rate five times that of Ireland.

What would happen next would rather emphasize the irrelevancy of the latest general election.

## II

### *The farm-owning classes*

In 1943, all other things being equal, the small-holders tended to vote for either Clann na Talmhan or Fianna Fail. The medium farmers were split three ways between the above choice and Fine Gael. The ranchers were mainly Fine Gael.

Of these parties, Clann na Talmhan possessed the promise of youth. However, it also possessed the weaknesses thereof.

It was a ramshackle party. Its strength varied between constituencies according to organization and personalities. In addition, there was within it a basic difference on the subject of land division. This split its medium farmer representatives, headed by its deputy lead-

er, Patrick Cogan, and the small farmers, led by its Mayo representation headed by Joseph Blowick. The former took its stand on the principle of 'Fixity of Tenure': the latter on rural Distributism. The party's leader, Michael Donnellan, an amiable man, better at Gaelic Athletics than at politics, was unfitted to unite the two. In November 1943 the party suffered its first loss; its Protestant T.D., William Sheldon, broke with it on its neutralist policy.

While Clann na Talmhan suffered from internal dissension, it could not participate as yet in building a larger Radical Republican entity. Its basic Vocationalism directly opposed the Labour Party's state capitalism. And Donnellan feared his right-wing too much to negotiate with the other Republican group on such matters of common agreement as credit control and family allowances. In any case, the 1944 Children's Allowances' Act weakened the radical significance of the latter.

In the general election of May 1944, the Clann lost seats. Then, in July, Donnellan resigned in favour of Blowick.

The new leader played down Vocationalism and opened negotiations with the Labour Party on welfare policy. The two parties co-operated in sponsoring the presidential candidature of Dr Patrick McCartan against Fianna Fail's Sean T. O'Ceallaigh and Fine Gael's Sean MacEoin. Clann na Talmhan gained a seat in bye-election.

But its wings became increasingly restive. In December 1946 two of its T.D.s. took prominent parts in a land division agitation in Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo. Cogan and his allies left the Clann and revived the National Agricultural Party the next April.

Blowick changed his tactics. In June the Clann was allied with Fine Gael against the new Health Bill (itself backed by Labour). As a result, in July, the Agricultural Party re-merged with Clann na Talmhan on its own terms, including a definite support for 'Fixity of Tenure'. But in January 1948 Cogan left the Clann again and fought the subsequent general election as an Independent.

Meanwhile and ignored by the Clann a number of new ideas appeared on Irish agriculture. In 1943 a prominent farmer of Co. Wexford, Captain E. Richards-Orpen, proposed that the problem of land-holding be transcended by the organization of rural areas as 'Economic Farm Units'. These would be made up of a number of small farms gathered round a processing and wholesaling centre. This idea generated considerable and influential support but it could never be put into general action. The larger farmers were strong enough, in general, to ignore the necessity for

local unity. On the other hand, the Emergency Parish Councils that might just have been developed as such a unit collapsed in 1945.

More effective was the Majority Report of the War-time Committee of Agriculture. This appeared in November 1945. It urged for 'Eire' a dairy economy backed by home production of grasses and cereals and resigned to its dependence on the British market.

The government accepted these proposals. It initiated schemes to supply electricity to rural areas, and to give the farmer state loans for arterial drainage (1945) and reconstruction of farm buildings (1948). A National Stud was set up (1945). Eggs were given a state-guaranteed price and national system of A.I.D. centres were established. Successive trade agreements with Britain encouraged the growth of agricultural produce exports thither in return for supplies of tractors and fertilizers. The war-time boom was maintained.

But there was cause for farmer discontent. Compulsory tillage was retained to produce the necessary cereals. The I.A.O.S. was annoyed increasingly by the government's continued sponsoring of its rival, the Dairy Disposal Company. The small farmer learnt about the discrepancy in the rural and urban shares of the national income: he himself enjoyed few of such urban benefits as subsidized housing or general insurance cover; in 1954 he would be earning £165-320 p.a. less than the industrial worker.

Rapport between the farm-owners was encouraged institutionally in two years. In 1946, the Federation of Rural Workers was founded. This formalized the apparent difference between organized rural workers and the unorganized employers. At the same time as it stimulated the raising of agricultural wages, it encouraged the reduction in numbers of farm employees and their replacement by machinery. From 1946, it was the agricultural labourer who left the land. Between 1939 and 1953, farm machinery costs rose by £35,000,000 while labour costs fell £28,000,000. Between 1926 and 1951, successive departures from the rural areas reduced agricultural employment from 53% to 40.8% of total Irish jobs.

On the other hand, there grew the Young Farmers Clubs, limited to sons and daughters of farm-owners (not labourers). From 1944 they made up a national organization, Macra na Feirme. They were inspired by the motives that had stimulated the rise of Clann na Talmhan. But the new movement included a greater complement of large farm people (its first component group was founded at Athy in Co. Kildare). And it avoided



positive political analysis, concentrating instead (and very successfully) upon technical education and cultural and 'social' matters. Its influence was reinforced in 1950 when a brother organization, Macra na Tuaithe, was formed for young farmers under the age of eighteen.

Economies also helped the unity of the rural propertied. The decline in small farm pig production and the lack of subsidies for eggs (until 1945) and potatoes forced the smallholder to concentrate upon the supply of calves for the larger farmers to raise. In October 1956 a National Farm Survey remarked that cattle-raising was the poorer farmers greatest worry. Large-small farm trade copied the Anglo-Irish one.

But in 1948 the crises that would cement the farmers' alliance had yet to appear. The position of the average farm owner continued to improve. In the February general election, Clann na Poblachta's rural victories depended on local circumstances. Though it won a large share of the small farm votes, its real breakthrough came in Dublin.

The Inter-Party governments assured James Dillon the Department of Agriculture. He initiated a regime that was intended to work with the co-operation of the farmer and not (as he claimed, like Fianna Fail) with his subjection. First, he ended compulsory tillage; as he maintained the guaranteed wheat price, production remained fairly high. In October 1948 he initiated a Parish Plan, that would use the parish as a centre of agricultural educational organization. The next year he also made the parish unit the basis for a Marshall Aid-financed expansion of Fianna Fail's drainage scheme into a national land reclamation plan. In 1950 he began to supply piped water to farms.

But his policies had a major weakness. The bulk of the production stimulated by them was for the British market. But, at this time, the British price guarantees to their own farmers were being expanded and rationalized by the post-war Labour Government. To obviate this Ireland signed successive agreements with the U.K. But these were signed on terms that emphasized British predominance. Ireland promised to limit its trade with Europe, but Britain gave no pledge to limit its own deficiency payments. An obvious example of a result of this imbalance was shown in the result of the Dillon-inspired drive to 'drown Britain in eggs'. This encouraged the appearance of a glut in both British and Irish markets. The Irish egg producer was left especially vulnerable to the Korean War slump. By 1955 egg exports to Britain were at less than one-tenth their 1949 figure. And the small farmer was



left still more dependent on his calves. Between 1948 and 1963, the Achonry Diocese (which straddles the small farm counties of Sligo, Mayo and Roscommon) saw baptisms decline by 41%; marriages by 50%.

Dillon in office overshadowed completely the Leader of Clann na Talmhan. As Minister for Lands, Blowick's major achievement was to launch a policy of increasing forestry. By 1950-1951, 9,400 trees were being planted per annum and the numbers were increasing steadily. Apart from that Blowick's only achievement was a Land Act that extended still further the Land Commission's powers of division.

By 1951, a number of farmer T.D.s were becoming disgruntled with the government. In November 1950 Cogan withdrew his support over the 'Battle of Baltinglass'. In this, the inhabitants of a village in his constituency went into active unrest against the appointment by Everett, the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, of a political client to the postmastership.

In April 1951 after Browne and his supporters had broken with the régime, two of Clann na Talmhan's three Munster T.D.s did the same. The bad harvest of 1950 had caused suffering to their dairy farming constituents. An Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association demanded an increase in the guaranteed price of milk.

The subsequent general election showed that the dissentients were in a minority among the farmers. Their material position had continued to improve under the Coalition. For them, Dillon's one major error of the egg glut had not outweighed his many positive services.

Thus the rump of Clann na Talmhan (now limited to Connacht) slightly increased its representation. Fine Gael, the party most associated with Dillon, gained a net eight seats, all rural. With its admission of Dillon and Flanagan in May, 1952, and its position as senior partner in the government that had proclaimed the Republic, Fine Gael was the leading force of the Republican right.

Dillon's Fianna Fail successor, Thomas Walsh, did not change agricultural policy radically. Compulsory tillage was not restored and the land reclamation scheme remained in existence.

But the latter was changed in its operation. In October, 1951, Dillon's Parish Plan was suspended (in fact, stopped altogether) for the lack of the necessary parish advisers to work it. Farm aid was henceforward given to the individual farmers, directly. Thus the potential for area planning was weakened though Muintir na Tire was later (1956) to attempt a similar scheme among their

guilds. A similarly atomistic approach was shown in a scheme to supplement the A.C.C. by direct state loans to farmers for agricultural machinery, cattle and sheep. But Walsh's main concern was the reorganization of Irish fisheries. For the sea ones, he established a Bord Iascaigh Mhara to co-ordinate and direct expansion.

But he was unfortunate in that his career as Minister clashed with MacEntee's austerity budgets. In 1952, consumer prices rose more than agricultural ones for the first time since the War. The Munster dairy farmers renewed their demand for higher prices. In January and February 1953, the I.C.M.S.A. conducted an inconclusive commodity strike. Fianna Fail lost a number of bye-elections in the area.

What was more, in the same year, a similar affair to that of Baltinglass occurred in Ballinalee, Co. Longford, the home of the Fine Gael leader, General Sean MacEoin.

Yet, in the general election of May, 1954, Fine Gael's rural gains were mainly at the expense of Clann na Talmhan and various Independent Farmer Deputies (including Cogan, now a member of Fianna Fail). Even in agricultural constituencies where it had won bye-elections, it could not maintain its advantage. This was due, in part, to Fianna Fail's superior organization; in part to the fact that it had most expectation of success in the bigger livestock producing areas, where wholesale prices had risen faster than feed prices.

Blowick, now accepted completely his position as leader of Fine Gael's second fiddle. He returned to the Department of Lands, Dillon to the Department of Agriculture.

Dillon's second period was less successful than his first. This was due to its initial euphoria. In April 1954 the U.K. had ended its meat rationing policy and had agreed to increase its imports of Irish cattle to that end. A cattle boom began.

Dillon carried out policies within this context and without making a major attempt to rectify the balance. He carried out Fianna Fail plans to drain the cattle areas of the Midlands and to begin the eradication of bovine tuberculosis. More generally beneficial to farmers were his preparation for an Agricultural Institute ('An Foras Taluntais') and, less directly and more weakly, Patrick O'Donnell's County and City Managements Act.

But, politically, the most significant achievement in Irish agriculture at this time was the founding of the National Farmers' Association on January 6th 1955. This body appeared as the result of the amalgamation of various County Farmers' Associations

dominated by energetic young men who had matured in Macra na Feirme. It absorbed the Irish Farmers' Federation. It was regarded favourably by Dillon. It has come to represent some 122,000 farms. However, such associations of (mainly small farm) commodity producers as the Irish Beet Growers Association and the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association have remained aloof. What is more, although it claims to speak for all farm-owners and seems to be composed at a ratio of four small farmers to one large one, it has organized a larger proportion of the farmers in Leinster and Munster than in Connacht and Republican Ulster. And it is led by the big landowners.

Its organization is reflected in its ideological weakness. It claims to speak for the Irish farmers (of all farm sizes) united against the other Irish. It accepts the imbalance of Irish agriculture both in land and in trade. Its concept of co-operation is in the purely economist form of the I.A.O.S.; in fact it worked early to bring that body into the small farm areas by helping it set up co-operative cattle marts to facilitate the calf trade. All in all, it is an organization to serve and encourage the kind of rural capitalists that have maintained for so long Irish subordination to external interests.

It soon had an opportunity to show its mettle. In November 1955, the British meat boom collapsed. Prices fell swiftly. For the next year, the agricultural price index was thirty-five points lower. The N.F.A.'s main aid in the crisis was the setting up of the cattle marts and the support for An Fóras Taluntais. But it survived.

Its survival was more significant than what now seems to be the last blow of smallholder leftism. In the general election of February 1957, four Sinn Féin T.D.s were elected, all from small farm areas. They did not take their seats.

In practice, the small farmer had to look for redress to an organization in which he was represented less effectively vis-à-vis his larger neighbours. But his need was to be justified by new social developments.

*Labour in confusion*

In June 1943, the Labour Party had reason to hope for a swift expansion in its strength. It had won 208,000 first preference votes (its largest number ever) in the election and now held its largest complement of Dail seats since 1927. It was the biggest party on the Dublin Corporation, with its leader there, Alderman Martin O'Sullivan, being Lord Mayor. It seemed that it had only to make an agreement with Clann na Talmhan to bring it to power within a decade as a partner in a Republican front.

But there were barriers to this prospect. The party's essential opportunism was relieved only by dogmatic, rather than rational adherence to the idea of nationalization especially of credit. This was not an adequate weapon with which to oppose Fianna Fail. With a hostile government, dominance on the Corporation could be, and was, an embarrassment. These circumstances provided the background and the justification for the personal split that was now to divide both the party and the I.T.U.C.

This was the Larkin-O'Brien feud, exacerbated by the I.T.G.W.U.'s development within the Labour Movement. That trade union's leadership had opposed the Trade Union Act but now saw in it possibilities to benefit it. It was also prepared to co-operate with the government over the Central Bank (to which O'Brien was appointed a Director). And it was mildly sympathetic to the new Transport Bill which aimed to extend State control over the railways in an authoritarian manner, albeit one strengthening the I.T.G.W.U.'s powers.

As a whole, the Labour Party disagreed with it. O'Brien discovered that not only were the Larkins in the party, but that his trade union's influence on it was no longer decisive. To him, the only possible explanation was a Communist plot.

In January, 1944, James Hickey, the I.T.G.W.U. party Labour Chairman and five of that trade union's eight T.D.s formed a separate National Labour Party, led by James Everett. In July, the I.T.G.W.U. transferred its affiliation thither. The new party had little prestige, only rudimentary organization, and no power in Dublin. It tended to act mainly as a Fianna Fail subsidiary. Its appearance nipped effectively in the bud any belief in the credibility of a Labour Government.

And, at this time, MacEntee and Ward were extending welfare



benefits, introducing small-scale Children's Allowances (a year before the U.K., but considerably less generous in scale). These weakened further the hopes for a Republican Front and the incentive to vote Labour.

By May, 1944, the Labour Party had failed either to reunite or to ally with Clann na Talmhan. In the general election, it failed to bring its erstwhile supporters to vote and lost four seats, one of which was the elder Larkin's.

In July, the I.T.G.W.U. was defeated in the I.T.U.C. on its motion against entering the World Federation of Trade Unions. It carried out the same tactics that it had used in the party struggle. It left the I.T.U.C. and elevating its Council of Irish Unions into a Congress of Irish Unions (Comhar Ceard Eireann) composed of thirteen trade unions based in Dublin and, thus free of alleged Communist influences from London and Belfast. Despite this split, figures of trade union membership nearly doubled between 1946 and 1961.

The C.I.U. threatened to try to use the Trade Union Act to supplant the English trade unions, and, perhaps, the Irish, albeit Larkinite, W.U.I., which had now joined the I.T.U.C., at last. Such intentions were soon thwarted. In July, 1946, the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional Part III of the Trade Union Act, with its provision for possible restriction of a firm's workers to the union of their majority. On this, the C.I.U.'s hopes had been based.

The dual split in the Labour Movement encouraged a right-wing move in both sections. This was most especially notable in National Labour and C.I.U. The Secretary to the former body, Frank Purcell, demanded an episcopal investigation into the Labour Party's 'Communism'. In January, 1948, one of its T.D.s, John O'Leary, was to declare that 'only Communists would denounce Franco's Spain or ask for diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R.'. Similarly the C.I.U. tended to give special weight to 'Christian principle' in its deliberations. In February, 1951, the I.T.G.W.U helped sponsor a clerically-inspired Catholic Workers' College. For a time, the C.I.U. considered joining the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions.

But the Labour Party showed a similar, if less extreme, tendency. Many of the more outspoken ex-members of the C.P.I. were expelled, as was Captain Peadar Cowan, who had started the Vanguard movement of Republicans to end partition on international Socialist principles. Despite these measures in April, 1945, the Labour Party lost the affiliation of I.N.T.O.



Weakness was shown too in the conduct of Labour's Councilors on the Dublin Corporation. In June 1944, Martin O'Sullivan won the Mayoralty the second time running, after having denounced this practice in candidates of other parties. This was allied to Labour's natural futility in this sphere, and to Fianna Fail's redrawing of Dublin's electoral areas. Naturally, after the Corporation election of June 1945, Labour had, again, fewer seats than either Fianna Fail or Fine Gael.

In 1946, both sectors of the debilitated Labour Movement accepted Lemass' replacement of the Emergency Wages Standstill Order with a measure to regulate the wage disputes that had become common with the peace. The Industrial Relations Act set up a Labour Court to advise on the settlement of industrial disputes. This body did aid various groups of unorganized workers. But its main significance was to encourage active collaboration between state, employers and trade unions, moves towards which were especially notable in the I.T.G.W.U. It had no powers to forcibly prevent strikes and, indeed did little to do so. Though between 1949 and 1959, 81% of its recommendations, involving 85% of workers involved, were accepted, most of these acceptances came only as second thoughts after rejection.

The most positive development in the Labour Movement at this time occurred in the countryside. A number of strikes of agricultural workers, directed by the W.U.I. resulted in the formation of a Federation of Rural Workers. This body had strengthened the hand of the agricultural labourers and turf-workers, especially in Leinster. More immediately it strengthened the Labour Party's rural strength against a threat from a new quarter.

On May 10th 1946, the ex-Chief of Staff of the I.R.A. Sean MacCaughey, died from his hunger-strike in Port Laoighis Prison. A campaign to free him had brought together many prominent Republicans, Socialists and other figures and had gained considerable popular support. The campaign's leaders recognized this as symptomatic of general dissatisfaction with existing parties and decided to prepare an alternative. On July 6th, 1946, they announced Clann na Poblachta ('The Republican Party').

The new grouping appealed to a wide cross-section of Republicanism. Its leaders included recalcitrant Republicans, like its leader, Sean MacBride, and left-wing Fianna Fail members, like its organizer, Noel Hartnett. Amongst its supporters were former Labour Party members, like Peadar Cowan, and ex-Christian Frontists, like Dr J. P. Brennan, the Dun Laoghaire Coroner, and Fine Gael members, like John Timoney of South Tipperary. But it ap-

pealed, especially to a large amorphous body of potential and actual left-wingers, prominent among which was a young doctor, Noel Browne, who had gained celebrity in a campaign to end tuberculosis. The new party appeared more radical (and more possible) than demoralized Labour. Its detailed policy proposals included, constitutionally, the proclamation of the Republic for all Ireland, the admission of Northern M.P.s to Dail Eireann and the ending of the Emergency laws. Educationally, it demanded education for all, the revival of the Irish language and a Council of Education. In other social matters, it urged a 'socially-just' regime based on Christian principles, which included a Housing Plan, a National Health Service and Dr Dignan's social welfare scheme. Economically, it proposed a National Economic Council, a minimum family wage, and repatriation of external assets to invest in development schemes for forestry, fisheries, land reclamation and the electrification of the railways. It also demanded parish councils. This was not Socialism, it was Vocationalism, albeit Vocationalism of the left, leaning towards Social Democracy. No attack was offered property rights nor was there any analysis given of the pitfalls that such a policy would face.

One such pitfall was dug in 1947, when MacEntee's Health Act was passed. Dr Ward had increased benefits, albeit meagrely, and put shoes on the poor of Dublin, while MacEntee had denounced more ambitious schemes: that of Dignan as 'slipshod' and that of Beveridge as 'totalitarian'. However, on his Secretary's fall from office, he took over his Bill and forced it through the Oireachtas. The Act streamlined and rationalized the country's health organization; in Part III, it prepared the way for a free Maternity and Children's Health Service. In October, Dr James Ryan, 'Eire's' first Minister for Health, produced a White Paper hinting at a British-style N.H.S. James Dillon initiated a law suit to test the constitutionality of Part III. The Catholic hierarchy attacked it as 'unchristian', declaring that a Means' Test would somehow protect the parent from bureaucracy. Neither of these disputes were solved when Fianna Fail left office. Furthermore, the party avoided mentioning the clerical one to its successors.

The Health Act could not save Fianna Fail's popularity. Though, since 1946, money wages had risen faster than the cost of living, they had failed to overtake the decline in real wages that had occurred between 1939 and 1945. And their rises had been achieved by strenuous efforts. Despite the Labour Court, strikes spread across the country. The most notable was the strike of the Dublin National Teachers from March to October, 1946.

The government was hurt further by scandal and gave the general impression of staleness.

In three by-elections, in November 1947, Clann na Poblachta won two seats. In the resultant general election it put up ninety-two candidates. It won seats in five of the six Dublin City constituencies, and in Dun Laoghaire. However, in the countryside, its success was dependent on its candidates, and it held only four seats. Even in Dublin, it came third to Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. In the new Dail, it had fewer T.D.s than the country-based Labour Party, which had fourteen, excluding the National Labour ones.

MacBride was already negotiating an alliance with Fine Gael. The position of the Labour Parties was more doubtful. However, in the main party's case, its plank of separation from the Bank of England had been weakened by the return of New Zealand to sterling. It wanted power more than anything; before the election, R. S. Anthony, whom it had expelled sixteen years previously, was allowed to re-enter. While in November, 1947, Roderick Connolly, an influential member, had urged an immediate alliance with the Clanns. National Labour was more doubtful. Its I.T.G.W.U. sponsors were opposed to any break with Fianna Fail. However, its deputies asserted their independent Labour identity. The I.T.G.W.U. began to grow cold towards its creation.

But the initial entry of the Republican left to coalition with Fine Gael caused considerable consternation amongst its followers. The I.R.A. revived. So, too, from 1948 did the Communist Party (now styled the Irish Workers' League), stimulated, also, by the Cold War.

The Inter-Party government are recognizably a stage in the degeneracy of class collaboration from the Popular Fronts to the *Apertura a Sinistra*. Whereas the former represents, at least, the fight against Fascism, they represent merely the fight against Fianna Fail. Accordingly, as far as their left wing goes, they are products of a diminished class understanding even if not one greater than the 1960s experiments.

On the other hand, alliance with Fine Gael and Clann na Talmhan was not entirely fruitless. MacBride established the formal Republic. Dr Browne, Clann na Poblachta's other Minister, operated his plan to eradicate T.B., and set up a National Blood Bank. Norton, as Minister for Social Welfare, reorganized the National Health Insurance Scheme to benefit the employee class, expanded insurance benefits to an amount nearer to Britain's and projected a reformed scheme of social welfare. Above all, Labour's Minis-

ters for Local Government, Tadhg Murphy, and, on his death, Michael Keyes, revived and expanded Fianna Fail's housing and slum clearance schemes. Between 1949 and 1958, Ireland was estimated as spending with Sweden the largest proportion of public aid to housing in Europe. Everett was Minister for Posts and Telegraphs. Sean Dunne, Secretary to the F.R.W. gained a weekly half-holiday for agricultural labourers. Of Fine Gael's Ministers, Mulcahy, as Minister for Education, improved the position of the teacher. Morrissey, Minister for Industry and Commerce, struggled to reduce prices and the Minister for Finance, Patrick MacGilligan accepted readily the reduction of Irish external assets to finance the spending.

Co-operation between Labour and National Labour on the government benches was expedited by O'Brien's retirement from the Secretaryship of the I.T.G.W.U. in 1946 and Larkin's death, the next year. The surviving I.T.G.W.U. leaders turned increasingly towards active support of Fianna Fail. Since the National Labour Party had not much organization, or faith in itself, it moved back towards Labour politics. In January, 1950, Norton and Hickie united in a demand for greater worker participation in management through increased nationalization. In June, the Labour Party was reunited, agreeing, on principle, to the desirability of all unions being Irish-based. No such compromise was yet possible in the Trade Union Movement.

At the same time, the Irish Labour Party was expanding into the north-east. In 1949, all the Northern Ireland Labour Party's candidates were defeated in a general election again overshadowed by the Republic issue. This caused that party to declare its acceptance of union with Britain and to break its links with the Anti-Partition Irish Labour Party. The latter absorbed the Republican elements in the N.I.L.P. and various other Labour-Republicans, and announced its intention of fighting Northern Irish elections. Unfortunately, its new members were soon quarrelling amongst themselves. As in the Republic, the Party was never to put up sufficient candidates to make a credible fight. From 1958, the N.I.L.P. would revive. The Northern Irish branches of the Irish Labour Party are now limited to Newry and Warrenpoint in County Down. However, the augmentation seemed, originally, to be, if nothing else, good propaganda.

From the end of 1950, the expanded Labour Party was tested by the economic crisis. This was held at bay by a new measure of price control. More worrying were two more personal difficulties.

From November to December of 1950, the village of Balting-



lass revolted on behalf of a popular claimant to the post of Postmaster as against Everett's nominee. The government backed him strongly, but he had to surrender his position in January, when he was faced by a growing opposition amongst government supporters, including Cogan, the Independent Farmer. It was the second crisis that provoked a general election.

Noel Browne had been appointed Minister for Health as the only possible Clann na Poblachta Minister that Fine Gael could accept readily. In office he had inaugurated a successful campaign to eradicate T.B. Then he turned to the maternity services where there was great need of improvement. He determined to implement Part III of MacEntee's Health Act.

The Irish Medical Association denounced his proposed Regulations, but the government was ready to ignore it. Then the Hierarchy announced that it agreed with the I.M.A. It attacked the Regulations under seven headings, composing three main points; the right of parents to provide for their children was threatened under a free scheme: there was a remote possibility that the gynaecological care might include birth control: the doctor's private relationships with patients might be tampered with by the State. Certain of its apologists, notably Fr Coyne of the Workers' College, were later to make alternative (and unimplemented) proposals for co-operative arrangements. However, as yet, in April, 1951, the Church was attacking negatively the only scheme proposed to reduce Irish mortality in child birth.

The government surrendered. Labour supported this action. Norton feared a new split in his party; several of his loyal supporters of 1944 (notably Keyes and O'Sullivan) were opposed to any disagreement with the Bishops. So successful was Labour at avoiding such a thing that Dr Brennan, who spoke for the I.M.A. interest in Clann na Poblachta, transferred his allegiance to Norton in the subsequent general election. However the I.T.U.C. announced its full support for the Minister for Health. MacBride's initial reaction was much like Norton's; he had already expelled Peadar Cowan for opposing Marshall Aid in 1948; he didn't want more trouble. Then he found that Browne was trying to obtain the Hierarchy's assent to a modified version of his Regulations. MacBride lost his nerve completely and ordered his follower to resign his office.

Being inexperienced in politics and despairing of political support, Browne did resign, but he left Clann na Poblachta also, and with him went Hartnett, and the party's T.D. for County Roscommon, John MacQuillan, to make up, with Peadar Cowan, a dis-



ting group. These 'Brownites' joined with Cogan and the Munster Farmer rebels to precipitate the dissolution of the Dail.

In the subsequent general election, the Brownites gained a seat, the Labour Party lost four (mainly in urban areas) and Clann na Poblachta was reduced to MacBride's South-West Dublin seat and its T.D. for County Cavan. Now the Brownites held more seats in Dublin City than Labour and the Clann combined.

But they did not try to organize more thoroughly. On Hartnett's advice, the Dubliners supported Fianna Fail. That party made Hartnett a Senator. However, MacQuillan was alienated and Browne's erstwhile lukewarm supporter, Oliver Flanagan, retreated to Fine Gael.

Support for Fianna Fail meant support for its austerity policies. In September, 1951, most price controls were ended. Repeal of the others followed swiftly. The following April, MacEntee's budget attacked the pockets of all classes. Income tax was increased; rationing was ended; the subsidies on tea, sugar and butter were removed: those on bread and flour, reduced; taxes on beer, spirits and petrol were raised. This made financial sense; it made less definite economic sense. In 1952 the consumer price index rose by 9%, its largest jump since 1943. Unemployment figures rose from 51,639, to 60,797. The next year the government cut a pay rise granted the civil servants by their salary tribunal.

The Dublin Brownites continued to support the government. It was backed also by the C.I.U., which, in May, 1952, signed a wage limitation agreement with the Federated Union of Employers. A leading figure in the I.T.G.W.U., William McMullan, was elected to the Seanad for Fianna Fail.

The government's left-wing support was rewarded by a number of small but important rationalizing reforms. In 1952, Ryan, as Minister for Health and Social Welfare passed his Social Welfare Act which organized the national welfare services in their present form. It was no more than Norton's original, abortive plan, limited in coverage because of the economic crisis. It did provide, however, a single national insurance organization, except for Workmen's Compensation and Children's Allowances. His Health Act (1953) included a more conservative form of 'Mother and Child' scheme with the principles extended to cover the embryo of his 1947 White Paper, in providing a limited form of National Health Service. This scheme met opposition from the Catholic hierarchy and the I.M.A., backed by Fine Gael. However, the Act became law and has become the centre for future developments in the health services.

On the strength of the Health Act, Browne and his supporters, Hartnett and Dr Michael French O'Carroll entered Fianna Fail in October, 1953.

However, the electorate at large was unconvinced by this legislation. In the general election of May, 1954, the Dublin Brownites (almost as much an embarrassment to Fianna Fail as it was to them) were defeated. Many urban workers turned from Fianna Fail to the Labour Party. Even more definite was the switch to Fine Gael, which had gained kudos as the leading party in the first coalition, whose Parliamentary leader had been Taoiseach in that government, and which was, apart from Fianna Fail, the only party to put up enough candidates to maintain itself in. Clann na Poblachta and the Parliamentary Labour Party (not its rank and file) both lacked the nerve to attempt to fight for office power without Fine Gael. However, the latter had to insist on an economic plan being placed in the Inter-party programme as the formal price of its adherence to it.

Just how formal the price was, was soon made clear. MacGilligan, who tended to be fairly favourable, refused the Department of Finance, preferring the Attorney-Generalship. The ex-Civil Servant, John O'Donovan, preferred the less exciting office of Parliamentary Secretary to the Taoiseach. A Fine Gael Minister for Finance was demanded by that party to counter-balance Norton's position at the Department of Industry and Commerce. So, in the end, Gerard Sweetman, with his cynicism about the whole principle of planning, took the post. Labour Ministers, besides Norton, included Brendan Corish as Minister for Social Welfare, Everett as Minister for Justice and Keyes, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs. MacBride and his two followers supported the government from without, feeling too weak to participate in the Executive.

From the second Inter-party government, the workers gained certain increases in welfare benefits, a commission, whose report has since prepared the way for radical changes in Workmen's Compensation Law (1956) and O'Donnell's County and City Managements Act (1956). Also the younger O'Higgins' Voluntary Health Insurance Scheme (1956) though designed to sabotage Ryan's plan, served, in practice, to supplement it. It is also true that Sweetman's credit squeeze did bear less harshly on expenditure on housing than on other matters.

But the failure of the plan to materialize until the last minute and the developing economic crisis of resale price rises and (from 1956) increased unemployment stimulated unrest amongst the La-

bour Party's rank and file. They had been doubtful about coalitions since 1951, when the Party Conference had forbidden participation therein without a special assembly. Now, headed by the Dublin Regional Council, they pressed for more radical policies. Norton reacted by stepping up his international capitalist methods in the hopes that their success would weaken their critics. It didn't work.

On the other hand, the successive crises had strengthened pressures for the re-union of the I.T.U.C. and the C.I.U. Already much of the distrust of the British-based trade unions had been weakened by the increased autonomy given by such of their Irish branches. On January 8th, 1956, the two Congresses formed a Provisional United Trade Union Organization to prepare for a permanent body.

The second Inter-Party government was failing apart. O'Donovan prepared a vague plan, which was published in October, 1956. In January, 1957, the Dublin Regional Council of the Labour Party was attacking the whole principle of the Coalition. At the end of that month, Clann na Poblachta followed suit. Within the Dail, Larkin was increasingly restive and, preferred, in fact, to withdraw his candidacy in the ensuing General Election.

The result of this was decisively anti-coalition. The Labour Party (whose Manifesto had avoided any mention of coalition politics) was reduced to twelve seats; the fewest for it, as a single whole, since 1943. MacBride lost his seat and his party only held one. In the Dublin constituencies, it was notable that a number of left-wing (or pseudo left-wing) Independent Deputies were returned to replace left-wing coalitionists. Among the more sincere of such was an unemployed man, Jack Murphy (who lost his nerve and resigned his seat after one year), Noel Browne (who had left Fianna Fail in a disagreement with MacEntee over their common Constituency), and, in Co. Roscommon, McQuillan. On May 16th, 1956, the last two were to form a new party, 'The National Progressive Democrats'. It was aimed most definitely against the waste of national resources in prestige products, but it became swiftly a refuge for Independent Socialists, such as Browne, himself, had become.

But most significant about the general election of March, 1957 was the widespread abstentions: people just did not know what to expect of anything.

*The predicament of the petty bourgeois*

The development of post-war economic crises stimulated divisions within the Irish establishment that might have been used by the manipulated to strengthen themselves against it. However, all that happened was that certain elements from among the ruling groups found themselves reduced to a position of subjection.

This was especially true of the petty bourgeoisie, the class of the self-employed and of employers of 15 people or less. This group has been the most fluid in Irish society. It includes many who use it as a starting-point to something better, whether in business, bureaucracy, professions or Church. At the same time, there are many within it who do not have such ambitions.

Both petty bourgeois elements had been doubtful about Fianna Fail coming to power. But they had been the principal beneficiaries of its protective legislation. The former had grown under it: the latter had maintained itself thereby.

But these conditions proved to be decreasingly sufficient for overall economic growth. In 1954, *Christus Rex*, in a survey on the growing footwear industry, decided that, although it had begun an export trade both with the U.K. and the U.S.A., it depended on protection for survival. Yet the American IBEC survey of the Irish economy had found in 1952 that such protection weakened enterprise, and in 1953 the survey *Dollar Exports* remarked that the family nature of most Irish businesses created negative attitudes in the businessmen concerned.

And the smaller businesses, although growing in number, were not, from 1946, growing as quickly as the larger, more vigorous firms. Although, in 1958, some 56.35% of manufacturing employment was given by firms employing less than 200, this represented a reduction in the numbers of such small firms of a decade before. Then (in 1946), 58.45% manufacturing employment had been given by firms employing less than 100. Between 1938 and 1963 the number of industrial firms employing less than 10 fell from half of the total constant – roughly at 3,000 – to one third thereof. By 1958, in fact, the average size of the Irish manufacturing unit was comparable to that of its Swedish equivalent and rather larger than the average units in Norway and Belgium. This consolidation was matched in the Irish retail trade.

The consolidated firms and the bureaucracy pressed for more



efficiency. At first the government endeavoured to achieve this in ways that did not weaken small business. In 1948, before losing office, Lemass introduced an Industrial Efficiency and Prices Bill to organize efficiency by a combination of trust-busting and development councils. The Inter-party Government's Industrial Development Act was another attempt to expand efficiency, but it was attacked bitterly by the (petty bourgeois) Federation of Irish Manufacturers. In 1952 the crisis necessitated more dramatic measures. Lemass supported the creation of a Management Institute. In the same year he passed a Restrictive Practices Act which created a Fair Trade Commission to examine restrictive trade practices (including resale price maintenance) and to report to the Minister for Industry and Commerce for him to act against them as he saw fit.

But, especially in 1952, the small traders were pressed by high taxation.

And they were hurt, too, by non-governmental activity. The ending of resale price maintenance initiated a period of price-cutting against the small retailer. He was also a victim of the slump of the mid-1950s.

But, at the same time, a threat was developing for the small manufacturer. His large rivals were beginning to press for freer trade.

## V

### *Big Business*

The Irish bourgeoisie did well out of the Second World War. Between 1938 and 1946, the money value of bank deposits rose by 103%. By 1949, the total value of external assets had risen to £400,000,000. It has been estimated by Professor E. T. Nevin, that, in 1953, 10% of Ireland's population owned 66.7% of Ireland's land and capital. The same man has declared since that there was little change in the distribution of Ireland's personal wealth between 1931 and 1961; in both years half of it was concentrated in estates valued at £10,000 or more. But, in the latter year, one third of it was concentrated in estates of £20,000 or more. However, the full significance of these latter facts is lessened by inflation.



By 1958, textiles, metals, engineering and (mainly since 1952) paper and printing works were all bigger employers than in 1938, and the average textile plant was the largest single employer of manufacturing labour.

But business knew how fragile was this prosperity. In September, 1945, a Federated Union of Employers was formed to protect the interests of its members against the dangers from below at a national level. It was successful because of the divisions and inadequacy of its opponents.

More formidable were the economic threats of Irish business arising out of its country's position in the world trade cycle. With the end of the Emergency, 'Eire' resumed its customary trade deficit on a greater scale than before 1939. In 1947, the excess of imports over exports was at £91,823,000: more than four times the largest inter-war deficit. Taxation was also a problem. In 1954, the F.U.E. was to produce a pamphlet by the economic historian, F.G. Hall, 'proving' that forty-nine Irish manufacturing and distributive companies had been made un-competitive by excessive direct taxation since 1938.

Thus, many of the early measures of the Inter-party government were welcomed by Irish business. MacGilligan's economy drive ended such schemes as Aer Lingus' transatlantic service, Radio Eireann's short-wave station, the building of new Government offices and aid for mineral prospecting and athletics. His Budgets of 1949 and 1950 reduced income tax. Unfortunately much of the benefit to business was lost by devaluation, though, as most external assets were held in Britain, the immediate blow did not harm the bourgeoisie as much as might have been expected. What did worry them was the return to a steady rise in the trade deficit after 1949.

But the crisis came with MacEntee's 1952 Budget. In the first place, it increased income tax. In the second place, it initiated an Irish slump at a time when Britain was entering into its period of 'Tory Affluence'. The contrast brought home to the manipulated Irishman the fact that something was wrong with the economy.

The big bourgeois was even better fitted to see this. His reaction was two-fold. First of all direct taxes had to be cut. But this had to be done with care. Ireland was a democracy. To reduce the social welfare services (already comparing unfavourably to those of the U.K.) could not be achieved without political counter-revolution. Direct taxation might be reduced in two other ways: — by transferring the emphasis of revenue collection to indirect taxes and by a new economy drive in the civil service.

The latter policy was especially attractive to Irish business. The take-over of the Dublin United Tramways Company in 1944 and of the Great Northern Railway (Ireland) between 1951 and 1958 had left considerable grievances amongst the shareholders in these units.

When, in May, 1954, Gerard Sweetman had been appointed Minister for Finance, it appeared that the alliance between bourgeois and bureaucrat was likely to collapse.

But opposition to direct taxation was not the only nostrum of Irish big business. Despite protests from the petty-bourgeois Federation of Irish Manufacturers, the newer element among the larger companies came into full agreement with the government's international outlook.

This manifested itself in two ways. By 1957, the major development was the steady encouragement of foreign capital investment, such as Norton encouraged as Minister for Industry and Commerce. This suited the larger (and the more efficient) business better than the smaller. The former was in a better position to bargain with the foreign interests. In any case, it was better than Norton's threatened 'Economic Plan' with its bureaucratic implications. Every pressure was used within the government (from Sweetman) as well as from without, to carry out the freer competition policy. As a result, it was not until October, 1956, with the reinforced economic crisis, that the government allowed the pleas of the ex-Civil Servant John O'Donovan and produced its Plan.

The other aspect of the freer competition policy developed more slowly. It became clear that, if foreign investments were to be encouraged, the prospective investor would want rather more than the Irish market to supply. However, this discovery was made by the bureaucratic element in the State, and becomes more important after 1957. Before that, government policy had been the orthodox one of protection against imports subject to the needs of the British market. The obvious example of this was Sweetman's import levy of March, 1956, which imposed a reduced charge on imports from Britain.

Similarly, the opening of the Irish market to foreign investments had its emphasis mainly on British firms. However, aided by the flow of American dollars to Europe, Coras Trachtala Teo was successful in establishing a trade (1955) and currency (1956) relationship with the U.S.A. This led, in turn, to further encouragement of investment from that quarter.

With bourgeois internationalism went national quietism. This was especially notable on the outstanding issue of political Na-

tionalism, partition. Whereas in the first half of the twentieth century, Irish Nationalist opinion had unthinkingly alienated the north-eastern Protestants, it began, in the second half, to try equally unthinkingly, to conciliate them. Ernest Blythe made utopian appeals to the Northern Nationalists to dissolve politically and form branches of the Gaelic League instead. The aged John J. Horgan went one better; he appealed to his fellow countrymen to win the friendship of the Ulster Unionists by joining in their glorious crusade against Russia. Their bourgeois readers smiled admiringly and forgot about them, but they themselves were no better. Northern Irish trade was treated, as always, merely as a part of British trade, no attempt being made to encourage it per se. The Irish bourgeoisie as leaders of the Republic accepted complacently such cross-border agreements as the Erne Agreement and (except insofar as it hurt dividends) the G.N.R. takeover. As far as they were concerned, Partition was there to stay. As far as they were concerned, why shouldn't it? Irish unity would be a new problem to a class overburdened with difficulties.

## VI

### *The Survival of the Civil Service*

With the end of the Emergency, many of the immediate executive controls thereof (but not the legal situation justifying them) were scrapped.

But the state bureaucracy still possessed its considerable pre-war power and maintained the potentialities thereof created under the Offences Against the State Acts.

This authority was threatened after 1945. The various opposition parties distrusted enhanced executive power, especially when associated with a government that had held office for over a decade. They agitated for the dilution of bureaucratic discretion.

Fianna Fail bowed to this. In 1947, it provided for the publication of all statutory instruments.

The first Inter-Party government had less reason to feel inhibited about limiting the powers of Fianna Fail's legacy. In 1948, a Labour Party motion set up in the Seanad a Select Committee on Statutory Instruments to scrutinize them and to report for inquiries on seemingly objectionable ones. Murphy prepared a County

and City Managements Bill to reduce direct central government control over the local managers: it became law in the second Coalition. But all this was animated by a mainly political opposition to a Fianna Fail-orientated body. This was shown clearly by Norton, at the Department of Social Welfare, who paralleled the action of Sean T. O'Ceallaigh in the 1930s and, in 1951 achieved the removal of his Permanent Secretary, D.J. O'Donovan.

From 1952, the economic crisis added a new dimension to the coalition parties' struggle against bureaucracy. The bourgeoisie demanded more action in the name of retrenchment. This justified, in 1955, the final granting to the lower-grade civil servants of their own arbitration and conciliation machinery. This had been urged for years; in 1938, a motion to achieve it had forced the dissolution of the ninth Dail. However, the need of Irish business was for a compact number of wellpaid employees, rather than a steadily swelling number of under-paid clerks. The latter enhanced the authority of the senior civil servants while increasing the drain of money into the bureaucracy. In May, 1956, Sweetman declared the reduction of civil service numbers to be government policy.

The earlier attacks on bureaucratic powers was not accompanied immediately by any campaign against the proliferation of state-sponsored bodies. New additions to the numbers of such included Coras Iompair Eireann (the Transport Company, 1944), the National Stud (1945), Irish Steel Holdings Ltd (1947), Aramhara Teo (the seaweed processing company, 1949), Coras Trachtala Teo and the Voluntary Health Insurance Board. The Minister for Posts and Telegraphs from 1951 to 1954, Erskine H. Childers, prepared to transform Radio Eireann into such an organization. In August, 1950, James Dillon, an agrarian reformer, with leanings towards Fine Gael's bourgeois wing, demanded the nationalization of Ireland's milling and fertiliser production. By 1951 state-sponsored bodies were more powerful than in 1963, when they controlled about 25% of Irish investment and employed 5% of all employed workers at a rate of 40% more than the average. Yet when, in February, 1950, Morrissey, the Minister for Industry and Commerce, was pressed for greater Dail control of these bodies, he took refuge in vague promises, never implemented.

The general bourgeois approval for these bodies arose because, although statist, they were, at least run internally on capitalist lines.

However, external control of them is a different matter. Their



directors were (and are) not embarrassed by the restraints of capitalist external control; they had no shareholders to pacify. And, while controlled by the Oireachtas as to general policy, their day to day working (which includes, unlike in Britain, their annual report and accounts) could not be questioned. Nor, apart from in their higher appointments, was there any clear relationship between them and the responsible Minister.

Besides this, it tended to be government policy to reserve the patronage of state-sponsored bodies to the more enterprising bureaucrats.

And, in any case, state capitalism, in an imperialist economy, will always be a less satisfying property form than private capitalism, to those who know the latter.

The Irish bourgeoisie became less eager to expand the numbers of state-sponsored industries. As economic crises developed, policy became geared to foreign capitalism rather than to internal state capitalism.

Yet the directors of the state-sponsored bodies have initiated techniques through which, since 1956, the civil servants have adapted their position the better to maintain it. State capitalist dynamism is based upon consciously prepared action to economic ends in the manner to which post-war Europe has accustomed itself. Such examples were used by many of the younger generation of state bureaucrats to revise their position the better to defend their prerogatives against the bourgeois attack.

Prominent among these new men is one Thomas Kenneth Whitaker, a Northern Irishman. In 1956, he was leapfrogged by Sweetman, over the heads of a number of senior men, into the Principal Secretaryship to the Department of Finance. Sweetman knew Whitaker to be financially a man after his own heart. Both agreed that, in the circumstances, government spending must be reduced to make way for productive (equated by both with 'private') investment. Both were satisfied with the social structure as it stood.

However, Whitaker was a Civil Servant. If he did not encourage a revived increase in bureaucratic numbers, nor did he participate in any startling reductions.

On two other matters, his disagreement with Sweetman became clear. He favoured a form of state planning vaguely derived from French 'programming'. And whereas the bourgeoisie tended to believe (in so far as they considered the matter) in Ireland's private capitalist development as a small part of an Anglo-American free enterprise economy, Whitaker and his associates look to Europe.



Here in 1956 capitalism was preparing to develop within lines as directed by an international bureaucratic elite. Such a scheme could ensure its participating civil servants a continuingly distinctive, dominant role in the capitalist-class structure.

## VII

### *The expansion and contraction of Irish Catholic power*

With the Russian advance into eastern Europe and O'Brien's denunciation of Larkin's 'Communism' Catholic social theory was able to maintain its pre-eminence in Irish political controversy.

It had to change to a certain extent. From 1941, the *Christus Rex* society aided, later, by *Hibernia* helped to turn Vocationalism from the organization of the state to schemes of co-partnership at the factory floor. Abroad, the south European dictators were considered more critically than before 1943. Mussolini was, of course, completely discredited. Salazar was regarded less favourably than before. But Franco had been too much of a protégé of the Irish Catholic hierarchy for it to consider criticizing him.

The Church's political authority was emphasized by various post-war organizations. Clann na Poblachta, with all its a-clerical background, leant to Vocationalism rather than to Socialism: its comparative success in 1948 may be regarded as much a triumph for clerical views as for the Republic. More strident were the National Labour Party and the Congress of Irish Unions whose Secretary, Leo Crawford, wrote in *Christus Rex* in January 1951, that his organization had 'led the way in its profession of allegiance to true (i.e. Christian) principles'. It was also a great backer of the Catholic Workers' College. Such politicians as Lemass and Dillon took care to intersperse their speeches with abuse for Communism.

There were more sinister tendencies developing in 'Eire'. In March, 1944, the Jesuit magazine *Studies* could demand by implication a stronger film censorship against 'subversion'. In a similar vein, in 1945, Fr Denis Fahey, founded Maria Duce to revive the old Vocationalist policies, though, in practice, it restricted itself to attacking the constitutional rights of Ireland's minority religions. In February, 1950, it won a brief victory by gaining support for its principles from Westmeath County Council, which re-

pudiated them at its next meeting, however. Dr MacQuaid maintained a ban on it in his archdiocese... Another example of Catholic chauvinism was the campaign mounted from February 1950, by both *Hibernia* and Sinn Fein, to ban the sale of British newspapers in Ireland.

Such bigotry was encouraged further by actions and trends associated with the Protestants. The British Labour government caused a wave of wealthy British emigres to take out Irish citizenship; 'the retreat from Moscow' as it was known by the old Establishment, part in sympathy, part contempt. Some of the stragglers bought land in their new country, an activity that caused some immediate resentment among local peasants. More publicized, but also more fleeting was the action in May, 1945, of a small group of students, of Trinity College, Dublin who angered the townsmen by burning the Irish flag.

Some Clerical influence can be seen in government activity at this time, despite that body's rejection of the proposals of Dignan and the Vocational Commission. The Industrial Relations Act was a less formidable execution of demands raised by certain clerical and capitalist interests for compulsory arbitration. The Censorship of Publications Act of 1946, while setting up an Appeals Board, insisted that censorship might be imposed on a reading of marked passages, rather than of the entire book concerned. O'Deirg ignored I.N.T.O.'s 1947 Plan for Education with its demands for the raising of the school-leaving age to sixteen, for a Council of Education and for an increase in the state's payment to managerial schools, to which the latter was opposed by the clerical managers. By 1947, the Bishops were feeling strong enough to mount a formal attack on the Mother and Child legislation.

Nothing basic was changed by the Inter-Party government. Mulcahy, as Minister for Education, did carry out a number of alleviations of the teachers' lot. The retiring age of women teachers was raised back to parity with that for men. The rate of pay 'by attendance' for teachers was replaced by a flat rate (1948). Teacher's pensions were increased (1949). Secondary Teachers were given an Arbitration Board (1950). But the essentials of the education system remained, Mulcahy's one enactment of I.N.T.O.'s education policy, was that of the Council of Education (1950) which did not include parents (as had been intended as its *raison d'être*) and which became notorious for the obscurantism of its actual educational proposals.

Upon the less conservative Ministers, clerical pressure was more

open. Dr Dignan himself led the opposition to Norton's social welfare scheme.

But the climax of the clerical advance came over the Mother and Child scheme. This was a test case, and its significance lay less in the scheme's rejection than in the electorate's belief in it as against the Hierarchy. It was felt that the latter had exceeded its authority by enough people (if not politicians) to enable Browne to remain in politics, to give the Brownites a plurality of the left-wing seats in Dublin City and, more significantly to smash Browne's original party even in the (more clerical-minded) rural areas. In 1953, the clergy tried to force Fianna Fail to withdraw its Health Bill, but de Valera was able to allow purely nominal concessions, in return for its quiescence.

The Fianna Fail government of 1951 carried out similar reforms. In 1952, its Adoption Act legalized adoption despite some clerical and right-wing protest.

Another significant portent was the career of Sean Moylan at the Department of Education. An ex-Republican General, and a building contractor, Moylan was, at once, the least-qualified Minister for Education since the founding of the state and the best since John Marcus O'Sullivan. He fought successfully to maintain the teachers' pensions' scale. He also initiated a school-building scheme in 1951. Finally, in March, 1954, he increased the grants to secondary schools for the first time for thirty years.

That this policy was still inadequate was due, partly, to Moylan's limitations, partly to the limitations of his leader, partly to the continuing dominance of the Catholic Church. Especially, it was due to the refusal of all political parties to consider education beyond the Council thereof, and according to the needs of Irish society. Public apathy backed this, Ireland was still a rural country: apart from the Church itself and the bureaucracy, there were few opportunities, or, as yet, needs, for the home-employment of intellectuals.

Thus, between 1947 and 1962 the percentage of Ireland's Gross National Product spent in State Aid to Education remained less than before 1939.

But, in other spheres, clerical authority was being tested. The Courts of Justice continued throughout the 1940's and 1950's to interpret the law with absolute impartiality. Most prominent were Tilson's (1951) and May's (1954) Cases in which the British Common Law principle that denied the validity of pre-marital agreements on children's education were set aside to benefit Catholic mothers. Coming in addition to the Mother and Child affair,

these decisions caused some Protestant worry. Nonetheless, in Begley's Case (1948), the paternal right of sole educator had been set aside already without benefiting the Catholic party. Frost's Case (1945) denied the Catholic widow of a broken mixed marriage any right to break the contract of separation to educate her child as a Catholic. Burke's Case (1951) restated the right of Protestant parents to use a legacy to educate their children as Protestants, though the codicil stipulated a Catholic education for them.

But, in the sphere of faith and morals, clerical authority was under attack from private sources. Though the offerings of the cinema were often cut by the censor, they showed the Irish people non-Catholic ways of life. In 1952, extreme Catholicism suffered a set-back when an attempt to ban the film *Death of a Salesman* proved abortive.

In the same year Dr Ernest Alton, the Protestant Unionist Provost of Dublin University died. His successor was Dr McConnell, a friend of de Valera. The end of the University's political isolation became reflected slowly at local levels. A growing number of County Councils began to vote scholarships thither. But the Archbishop's ban remained.

In 1954, Fr Fahey died. Maria Duce was soon replaced by An Fhirinne, an organization which never gained equivalent influence.

In *Christus Rex* for October, 1956 another priest, Fr Thomas Fitzgerald showed a new tendency in clerical outlook, when he urged that Priests 'lead' rather than 'rule' their flocks.

Yet there were still unpleasant incidents. In October, 1952, the Papal Nuncio regarded himself as having been insulted at a public meeting. In the repercussions, his putative insulters were subjected to a storm of abuse.

More incidents showed that the struggle against religiosity still had to be fierce. It took a year (1954-1955) to obtain the showing in Dublin of Henry Moore's 'Reclining Figure'. In October of the latter year, a football match between Ireland and Yugoslavia nearly had to be cancelled by clerical pressure not to kick off, which was, however, defied successfully by Oscar Traynor.

This ambiguity in the situation was encouraged by the fact that the lay establishment felt in continuing need of clerical authority. It was grateful for clerical denunciation of the I.R.A. in 1955. Also, it had no wish to shake the social order by mounting an attack on Catholic power. All it really wanted was a slight relaxation and a reduction of the crudities of the status quo, including clerical control of education, some censorship and illegal divorce.



It had little real quarrel with the principles of Vocationalism, divorced of such incendiary principles as credit reform.

But the continuing economic crisis was forcing the lay establishment to try to reconsider society the better to maintain their position therein. A major contributory weakness of the economy was clearly education. This fact made for the contradictions within the social position of the Irish Catholic Church after 1957.

## INTERMISSION

### *The frustration of the literati*

With Dominion status achieved, the contradictory nature of the Literary-National alliance was emphasized. Each movement had used the other. Now the latter was established in power and allied to such groups as the Catholic Church whose interests were not those of its former associates. In these circumstances the English-writing literati found its inspiration under fire. In 1929, it received the major blow of the Censorship Act. This was itself just an obvious set-back among a number of small negative actions that forced the writers to recognize that they were not to have the influence that Nationalism had seemed to promise them.

Against this, the older generation of Irish writers were unequipped to fight. Firstly, none of them had any real wish to change the status quo in matters other than censorship reform. Their sheer social negativism was shown in many ways. Æ, the co-operatives' organizer, became an ardent supporter of Cumann na nGaedhael. Yeats, an opponent of Catholic censorship, was eager to support the Catholic Fascism of O'Duffy. Gogarty, an ex-Senator of the United Ireland Party wrote in praise of the partition of Ireland out of spite against de Valera. In their actions in their speeches, in their political writings, one can find nothing apart from personal prejudice and interested pleas. Only two things can be said for Anglo-Irish writing at this period. The period of Yeats's public cretinism was the period of Yeats's greatest poetry. The Irish people showed their good sense in laughing off the former and accepting the latter.

And it was not as though the writers were themselves as ready to practice what they preached. James Joyce had found it necessary to leave Ireland in the good days of the literary movement.



Now it began to close in upon itself, the process was repeated. Sean O'Casey was forced into exile in 1928. Seven years later, Brinsley MacNamara (who had gained the reputation of a liberal when a book of his was burnt by a township that it had libelled) tried to bowdlerize the former's *Silver Tassie* before its presentation at the Abbey Theatre. Later still, Samuel Beckett has had to retire to France.

With a harsh censorship of books and no censorship of plays, much artistic creativity was diverted towards the theatre. From 1927 throughout the 1930s the Earl and Countess of Longford allied with the young actors, Michael MacLiammor and Hilton Edwards, in productions that made famous the Gate Theatre. At the Abbey Theatre, Yeats twice refused to ban plays 'derogatory to Ireland'. And, for a brief period, from 1935, the Theatre entered on a period of Indian summer. In the former year, Yeats was joined by the writers, Frank O'Connor and F. R. Higgins and the young producer, Hugh Hunt. For three years, the Theatre seemed to relive its better period. Then came disruptions. Hugh Hunt was refused permission to put on a somewhat a-clerical play, *The White Steed*, and resigned. In 1939, Yeats died and O'Connor resigned. In 1941, Higgins died, and was succeeded as Managing Director, by Ernest Blythe, one-time Minister for Finance under Cosgrave.

It had been Yeats's hope that the new generation of Anglo-Irish writers should revive the literary movement to active life. Certainly, such men as Frank O'Connor, Sean O'Faolain, Liam O'Flaherty and, of course, Peadar O'Donnell could be said to be closer than their predecessors to popular feeling in the 1930s. All had had experience of the Republican movement. And their efforts did achieve the admission of an appeal board into the censorship machine in 1946.

But the actual revitalization of Anglo-Irish culture never occurred. Some isolated works of art were produced. A magazine *The Bell* provided, in the 1940s and early 1950s, a centre for literary achievement. Yet, though the fire was kept up it never rose high. The writers remained tolerated on the terms imposed by the Establishment. The censorship still takes toll of literature. Its discipline has been known (as in the case of the Connacht writer John MacGahern) to be reinforced by exterior powers to a point where its victim has his means of living taken from him.

Part of the reason for this is the continuing stagnation of Irish education. However, there are reasons less flattering to the writers. Their second generation were, in their way as insensitive to

the causes of Ireland's problems as their predecessors. This fact can be seen when they enter into biography, history or politics. Frank O'Connor wrote a somewhat schizophrenic life of Michael Collins. Sean O'Faolain's *The Irish* concentrates on the Celtic period. The younger generation are at once more developed and less consciously so; Brendan Behan was an implicit Socialist; John B. Keane is a confused Agrarian. All deal with the symptoms rather than the causes of the Irish Question.

This was seen best in the literary monthly magazine, *The Bell* which appeared first in October, 1940, continued to April, 1948, and then had a brief revival from November 1950 to December, 1954. This was perhaps the most sustained attempt ever made by the literati to create a weltanschauung that would provide the justification for social reform. It was a failure. The Editor (to 1946), Sean O'Faolain made quite good criticisms on certain aspects of the cultural scene, such as the Gaelic Revival and Censorship and he published a number of muck-raking articles. But he had no basis in which to build a critique beyond one 'Nationalist, Democratic and Catholic'. In an early issue, he stated that 'the first thing we must do in Ireland is to have the facts and understand the picture'. Unfortunately, *The Bell* never developed any adequate criteria for finding or seeking facts. When O'Faolain resigned 'the picture' (of Irish society) still included large blank spaces in some parts, while others were cluttered up with unnecessary detail. O'Faolain's successor, the Republican Socialist, Peadar O'Donnell, was, surprisingly enough, less formally socially conscious than his predecessor. Under him *The Bell* became completely a literary magazine.

Cultural isolation encouraged the Anglo-Irish literati to look somewhat enviously upon the apparent satisfaction of the linguistic revivalists. Naturally, the latter benefited more from National independence. The linguistic revival had been a part of the National movement, not merely its ally. What was more, Irish writing was less subversive than English writing in a mainly English-speaking state and, accordingly, it was less to be censored than the latter.

Yet the official encouragement of the Irish language has proved to be as debilitating for it as the attacks on English writing were to that. The linguistic revival has been tamed to suit the establishment. The liberalizing influences of the pre-1914 Gaelic League were not expanded. The example of the Folk High Schools of Denmark with their national cultural enlightenment for adult pupils were not copied in Ireland until 1957, and, then, only in a

small way. What is left is the formal Irish education of juvenile and adolescent pupils, the use of Irish as a qualification for entry to official positions, help for the Gaeltacht and, far less justifiable but more apparent, a small group of people who seem to be making a good thing out of the language movement.

It is, then, scarcely surprising that a small group of people, most of whom have been prominent in maintaining the social background for conservative linguistic policy, should choose, in September, 1965, to organize a campaign against the actual policy of revival. It may be doubted whether there will be much enthusiasm for this, especially as this 'Language Freedom Movement' tends to talk with two voices: one declaring that it hopes to make the language loved by ending the compulsion in its teaching: the other regretting its existence in the name of the new cosmopolitanism. However, it may have some success for two reasons: the possible Irish entry to the E.E.C. and the reaction caused by attacks on its right to hold meetings in the name of 'Nationalism'.

In the last resort, neither the Irish nor the Anglo-Irish micro-cultural movements can survive in a healthy condition if they struggle for their aims in isolation from the totality of Irish social issues. How far they can do this depends on how far their ideals can be accepted by the Irish worker.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE NEW DEAL OF SEAN LEMASS 1957-1967

*'...That one man (T.K. Whitaker) could exert such an influence all in the name of practicality and realism – it is a terrible warning!' –*

*Extract from a Letter to the Author – April 7th 1967*

#### I

#### *Bourgeois and Bureaucrat*

It is, as yet, difficult to distinguish accurately the significant developments in Irish society since 1957. Certain dates at the beginning of the period do seem to be more important than others, but that is all. What one can say is that the history of the Republic of Ireland has developed according to policies that contrast directly with those executed over the previous thirty-five years but which correspond to the present real needs of the Irish Establishment.

For seven years, from Eamon de Valera's retirement to the Presidency in June 1959, the chosen exemplar of this elite was Sean Lemass. Since November, 1966, it has been Sean Lynch. But it is Lemass who represents it more adequately. He entered active politics just after the consummation of the bourgeois revolution; he instituted the policies that protected that revolution's status quo; finally, he turned the clock back again for the same cause. This is a record of dedication that Lynch cannot yet match. It would be wrong, however, to assume that he will have any inhibitions about trying to do so.

How will he try? How has it been attempted since 1957? The subjective duty of de Valera, of Lemass, and, now, of Lynch, has been, is now, and will be in the future to maintain the Irish Establishment in the twenty-six counties. This is a task both economic and political, because Ireland's rulers have their powers

justified by their economic benefits and because such powers have to be maintained against the rest of the population.

The task has been accomplished successfully. The political achievement is clear. Fianna Fail has remained in power in two successive elections; although, in 1961, its vote fell below 500,000 for the first time since 1932, it was able to make up the loss in 1965. What is more, the second party in the country, Fine Gael, presents a mirror-image to the government, and Labour is, politically, very much a bad third to its rivals.

Some of the reasons for this lie in the political development of the state since 1957; in the sophistication of Fianna Fail as opposed to the haverings of its opponents. Others must be admitted to be symptomatic of other aspects of the contemporary period. Unemployment, though now rising, has not yet reached the 1957 level. The population has risen from 2,818,000 in 1961, to 2,894,002 in 1966. The fact (not surprising in a still rural country) that the Republic's intake of calories is amongst the highest in Europe has been pressed into government propaganda. Finally, the continuing improvement in North South relations has culminated in meetings between the Ministers of the two areas since January 1965 and in October, 1967 a technical agreement to co-operate in the distribution of electricity. These have given the Irish of the Republic an impression that re-union on their own terms is a probability.

But the most certain advantage possessed by the establishment in the Republic of Ireland is the division of its enemies.

The composition of the said establishment is much as ten years previously. At its head is the old alliance of Top bureaucrat and big bourgeois. With this Axis are associated on a satellite basis, the large farmer, the petty bourgeois, and, albeit in a special position, the Catholic Bishop.

Both the dominant groups act as willing agents for foreign imperialisms. But disagreement exists as to the nature of the imperialism that should control the agency and as to the form that the agency should take. The big bourgeois looks to the direct capitalist control of Anglo-American trading interests. The bureaucrat prefers it in its formalized and regulated form of the European Economic Community.

As yet, big business has had the advantage. The British trade's pre-eminence in Ireland's capitalist economy has been too great to dislodge without dislocation of the latter. However, the growth of the American business interest in Britain has encouraged the development of an equivalent Irish-American trade. This was reflected



in 1956, when the government based the Irish part in American, as well as British, reserves. Nonetheless, the British market has remained the chief focus for Irish exporters. Indeed it has been strengthened since 1957, and, especially, since the British (and Irish) failure to enter the E.E.C. in January, 1963. Between 1963 and 1964 the proportion of Irish exports taken by the U.K. grew in direct proportion to their total growth. In October of the latter year, Britain imposed a unilateral 15% import duty which operated against Irish goods as well as those from elsewhere. The Republic's immediate reaction was to initiate (among more reasonable measures) subsidies aimed specifically to help its traders in the English market. Finally, in December 1965, there was negotiated an Anglo-Irish Free Trade Area. The form of this area appears to benefit most definitely the textile firms and slaughterers (though the livestock trade was given guarantees that encouraged it to overload the British market in 1966). At the same time, the only mention of markets outside the British Isles is in a clause limiting exports of materials made in low cost countries. The White Paper accompanying the Agreement 'assumed' that Ireland would be by 1970, within a greater European free trade area including both E.E.C. and E.F.T.A.: big business was safeguarding itself accordingly. During the past year (1967-1968) two of the traditional Irish protected industries, motor car assembling and shoemaking, have had their protection attacked. In September 1968, plans are announced to try to hasten to weaken dependence on the English market by allowing exporting firms to postpone demanding tax rebates until they needed to pay for machinery depreciation. But now Ireland is dependent on foreign investment.

Freedom of the (British) trade is merely one aspect of Ireland's bourgeois economic policy. In 1958 the coverage of the Control of Manufactures law was removed for firms established in Ireland producing for export and offering 50% of their bona fide total to Irish investors. This mild change does not seem to have satisfied the makers of economic policy. The second Economic Programme envisages the complete scrapping of the law. From 1959, a special trading estate has been developed around the customs-free Shannon Airport; it is aimed to attract foreign firms encouraged by a twenty-five years tax moratorium. Under the law as rationalized in 1959 foreign manufacturers are offered cash grants of up to two thirds the total cost of setting up industries in Ireland. By March 31st 1965, some 234 new foreign projects had been set up in Ireland; 40% of them were British; 15%

American. The right to exploit Ireland's mineral resources has been surrendered to Canadian and American firms, subject only to Irish possession of the mining royalties. The centre of Dublin has been bought up by British property speculators. These are just the respectable stories.

It is not surprising that the government is carrying out this policy, when one realizes that private Irish firms are entering increasingly into association with foreign opposite numbers. As early as June 1962, *Hibernia* remarked on this. It pointed out that the process was generally most notable among the biggest and most likely firms, and that it occurred chiefly in co-operation with British firms and (more occasionally) with American ones. It declared that 'the pattern is one of external participation in the ownership of a subsidiary or of the parent firm, coupled with an exchange of technical information mainly one way, and a degree of access to the Irish market together with help for exports'. Such practices created the atmosphere in which in April 1967 the State-sponsored subsidiary, Erin Foods could form with H. J. Heinz Co. a company to sell its products on the British market.

The Heinz-Erin Agreement is the revelation of the secondary role of the bureaucracy in its partnership with Irish business. Nonetheless, the authority of the former has grown during the past decade. From 1957 to 1967 the number of top bureaucrats is thought to have risen from 433 to 640. Between 1962 and 1966 the percentage of Ireland's G.N.P. made up of the public sector's spending rose from 32.5% to 37.5%, the highest in Western Europe. At the same time, the percentage taken up by social welfare spending has remained Europe's lowest, outside Portugal.

Expansion in spending has accompanied a change in bureaucratic techniques. Whitaker, backed by Lemass and by Dr Ryan, as Minister for Finance until 1965, has asserted the civil service as a positive economic directive force.

One means to this amounted to a departmental revolution: in November 1959 the Department of Finance was augmented by a Development Section. But this was itself the instrument by which to guide the economy under State direction.

The technique of doing this is the Economic Programme, a much weaker version of the French Plan. Specimens of this have appeared twice. The first was introduced in November 1958, to chart Ireland's economic progress for five years. the second was introduced to take over the duty of prophecy from the first. It was intended to programme for a period ending in 1970, but, in October 1966 it was announced that it would have to be amended

drastically.

It is fair to say that there were a number of people (including Lemass himself) who warned against placing too much trust in programming. The programme was a guide rather than a directive. It was essentially an economic placebo, and as such a very useful one. This scepticism was justified when the first Programme was found to have anticipated half the rate of economic growth that had occurred in fact over its period.

The programmers determined not to make the same mistake again. They were now, they felt, in a better position to know Ireland's economic future. They possessed the Development Section. Between 1961 and 1965 a Committee on Industrial Organization (C.I.O.), including representatives of both capital and labour, had issued reports on the prospects of Irish industrial development. From October 1963 a similarly-manned National Industrial Economic Council has existed to advise on the principles of economic growth. Backed by increased knowledge, the second Programme was published as a fully-detailed prophecy.

Unfortunately Ireland's actual rate of growth in its programme's first two years came to one quarter of its anticipation. Unemployment is increasing. This is not really surprising. In the Republic of Ireland today effective programming (and therefore, of course, 'planning') is a doubtful possibility. This is because of Ireland's dependence not only on international trade, but on the foreign entrepreneurs called in by its capitalists to help them in their dependence. The policies of such entrepreneurs in regard to Ireland tend to be governed more by their home offices than by the programmers. This was accepted by Whitaker's original pamphlet *Economic Development* which anticipated the first Programme. However, the problem was passed over therein as a necessary price to pay for benefits in managerial experience that such firms could supply.

The programmers' answer to this weakness is to try to transcend it. The E.E.C. is, for them, the ideal, possessing, as it does, a large market directed by a supernational group of bureaucrats. Thus entry to the E.E.C. is government policy. In 1957, Lemass was anticipating it by 1959. In 1962, Lynch prophesied entry in 1963. The entire second Economic Programme was based on the assumption that Ireland would have entered the Community by 1970. Now 1975 is the deadline.

But here, again, appears the weakness of the bureaucracy. The Anglo-Irish trade continues to dominate the economy, partly due to the wishes of the large firms, partly to the inertia of the small-

er ones. Britain has yet to enter the E.E.C. Ireland cannot enter until it does. Thus, the latter's second application for admission was presented within a week of Britain's, and rejected at the same time.

The bureaucracy cannot provide anything to break Irish capitalism. The general policy of the original Economic Programme did no more than reflect the view of the contemporary establishment economists that Ireland could escape from its existing economic crisis only by increased investment in production. Such investment did not include the means of full scale state capitalism. The methods employed to raise the money, however, included reduction in social investment, the end of the external reserve backing for currency, foreign investment and reduced direct taxation. The bureaucracy cannot divorce itself from capitalist methods.

The second Programme gave an inkling of why this should be so. The E.E.C., to which Ireland's entry was so readily anticipated, is a capitalist institution; even the pseudo-Socialism of state capitalism would be considered inimically by its members. However, there were significant details within the Programme's limits; notably its readiness to anticipate the greatest measure of rural depopulation since the famine. On the other hand, the second Programme demanded more expenditure on education, social welfare and aid to the underdeveloped states, but this was subject to the proposed increase in economic growth.

The motive for this conservatism is one of caution. The expansion of bureaucratic power takes place in circumstances that necessitate the maintenance of capitalism both at home and abroad. Since the bureaucracy wants to enter the E.E.C. it cannot attack the countries with which it hopes to ally, all of which maintain capitalist economics. Since it is itself an elite body, it cannot attack Irish capitalism too determinedly for fear of shaking its own power. Above all, international capitalism offers enough incentives to leading bureaucrats not to encourage them to fight against it.

At the same time, it is these people and their associates who display most offensively the ubiquitous high-mindedness associated with the statements of the system's theorists. The Irish people are urged to work (if they can find work); to save (if they can find money) and not to expect too much from their country (they can scarcely have many such illusions). They are asked to do this without question by men unlike many of them in only one thing: these people know whence their next meal will come. This applies now to the minor bureaucrats, as was shown by the govern-



ment decisions to 'save the west' by arbitrarily moving two departments thither. Such a high-minded action would have been unthinkable even ten years ago.

If the programmes have failed to dislodge bourgeois hegemony in Irish society, they are succeeding in weakening the constitutional institutions associated with the hegemony. There has been no discussion of the Programmes in Dail Eireann. In fact it appears that the C.I.O. had, and the N.I.E.C. has, more influence on the economy of the country than its elected representatives. At the local level, the authorities have less real power than the Chambers of Commerce. The formers' new development powers are less limited than before by the national bureaucracy at a time when they have been long deprived of the means to use them. Even the times of local elections are dictated by the Minister for Local Government. Swiftly and silently Ireland has realized, in practice, the dream of the Vocationalists. None of them seems really happy about it. Part of the reason for this is the fact that, since 1957, Ireland has been ruled by the same party. But there is no real reason to suppose that the immediate alternative will be any better.

In another sphere, the fact of class has forced bourgeois and bureaucrat into an unsatisfactory compromise. The bourgeois ethos tends to identify with the farmers among the manipulated. The bureaucrats endeavour to win the amity of the workers. Economic and political fact makes it impossible to satisfy either.

In foreign policy, the establishment is similarly hobbled. The bourgeois is not enamoured with neutrality and the bureaucrat is against it as it threatens to handicap entry to the E.E.C. In February 1962, the Minister for Lands, Michael O'Morain, hinted as much. More significantly in March 1967 his suggestions were taken up by the prominent Eurocrat, M. Albert Coppé. But events have necessitated the avoidance of clearer action or statement on this matter. While Ireland's rulers have become increasingly inimical to non-alignment, its ordinary citizens are more favourable to it than before. From 1956, its position in world affairs appeared to be stimulated by its delegation in U.N.O. In July 1960, its soldiers took part in that body's peace-enforcement in the Congo, despite the protests of such 'insular leftists' as Noel Browne. In August, Lemass was careful to emphasize Irish sympathy to N.A.T.O. Then two things happened. In November 1960, the 'peace-making' resulted in the death of a force of Irish soldiers. A year later, Conor Cruise O'Brien endeavoured to implement his mandate in Katanga, only to find it sabotaged by N.A.T.O. powers. Admittedly, his resignation enabled the Department of Exter-



nal Affairs to tone down practical neutrality. Its circumstances did increase popular support for its forms. This support was encouraged further by the words of John F. Kennedy, on his visit in June 1963, and by their allowing through his murder in November. He praised Irish neutrality; he did not mention what was, by this time, the essential negativity that made it please him. Since then, the War in Vietnam has not encouraged Irish support for the Atlantic Alliance. (The Czech crisis may, partly, encourage it, yet). The situation remains static; the government can twist neutrality as in its refusal to let R.T.E. news team visit Vietnam; it has feared to dispense with it. But, when Ireland applied again for entry to the E.E.C. in 1967 Lynch revived the hints of entry into N.A.T.O.

The Irish establishment's only clear victory has been in the sphere of culture. Here, clerical dominance and intellectual elitism have created a climate of opinion unable to withstand the new gutless cosmopolitanism justified by the needs of bureaucratic capitalism. The open property market involves (and, therefore, must justify) the destruction of the Georgian areas of Dublin, and the evacuation of the population of the city centre to the suburbs. The linguistic needs of international trade create an atmosphere favourable to the weakening of the Irish linguistic revival. Such acts have been achieved entirely on the manipulator's own level.

These facts (and other aspects of the needs of Irish capitalism that will be considered) have encouraged considerable (as yet, disorganized) agitation to prevent new coercive measures. Police brutality is being alleged with increasing frequency. The government is reacting to criticism by bureaucratic suppression in all spheres that it can influence. A referendum (the second in ten years) has been called to try to end proportional representation and, this time, to weight the vote of the western areas against Dublin. This is being done in the name of 'strong government', such as could (though this is not said) attack the trade (and farmers') unions and, if necessary, the Church; and pass a proposed criminal justice bill that would make it an offence to agitate without police permission – all with immediate impunity. Whether this explains all Fianna Fail's blatancies is another matter.

The bourgeois-bureaucrat dialogue is continuing in the political sphere. It continues across the division between the two main parties. Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, who control together 119 of the 144 seats in Dail Eireann.

In Fianna Fail the division is somewhat blurred by two things. Being the government, all its leading figures tend to be influenced

by the state bureaucracy, anyway. Also there is a declining, but still influential, old guard in the party. Its leader is Frank Aiken, Minister for External Affairs and, since, 1965, Tanaiste. It tends to dislike the fact of class and to try to avoid it intellectually as well as officially. These old Populists still hanker towards Vocationalism. Accordingly, they provide a rather embarrassing backing for the party's business wing.

In these circumstances the latest struggle for the party leadership was worked out in November 1966. The most prominent candidate was Charles Haughey, Minister for Agriculture, son-in-law of Sean Lemass, of a Fine Gael family. His political strength lies in the fact that he has never allied openly with either section of the Irish Establishment. Unfortunately, he was at this time fighting an open, and embarrassing, struggle with the National Farmers' Association. This reinforced the cause for opposition to him from the bourgeoisie and the old guard. They backed the candidacy of George Colley, Minister for Industry and Commerce, with an impeccable party background, but who had only entered the government only in April 1965. Rather than succeed to the leadership of a broken party, Haughey retreated to back the candidacy of an older man. This was Sean Lynch, Minister for Finance, prominent less politically than for his prowess as a hurling player, but more deeply associated with Whitaker and the state bureaucracy, than the other candidates. He defeated Colley. As a quid pro quo, Haughey succeeded him at the Department of Finance, in effect becoming heir apparent.

There were signs that this did not satisfy his Permanent Secretary. The reason for this appeared in his budget of April 1967. Apart from certain small increase in welfare benefits, it was a budget essentially bourgeois in tone. Surtax allowances were given to the young executives (though this benefits also the officers of the development bureaux). Increased allowances were offered foreign entrepreneurs. They, and their home opposite numbers, were encouraged to invest in the west of Ireland and thus to raise living standards therein. The actual small farmers were given, at last, freedom of rates from land of under £20 valuation, had their rights to unemployment assistance reinforced, and were given subsidies for farmhouse tourism. (These are, in effect, a dole). There can be little doubt that this budget, and Haughey's delivery of it, reinforced his position in the Party.

Opposing Lynch is a man even less inspiring, Liam Cosgrave, son of W.T. and Leader of Fine Gael. Unlike Lynch, however, he is not the spokesman of the state bureaucracy, mainly because he

has not been directly associated with that group since 1957. He is essentially an honest broker, presiding over a party wherein the difference between bourgeois and bureaucrat are clearly delineated.

Until April 1965, the Presidency and Parliamentary Leadership of the party were in the hands of the most articulate of agrarian capitalists, James Dillon, who had held the first office from February 1960 and the second from October 1959. He put forward a party policy appealing to the interests of capitalists and farmers, not excluding denunciation of compulsory Irish, but with certain old-style populist attacks on such gaps in the second programme as that of housing. Under Dillon's leadership, the Party opposed the bureaucratic tendency of the 1965 Land Act and the attack on primogeniture in the 1964 Succession Act. This policy had some success in the West and enabled the party to absorb the remnants of Clann na Talmhan. However, it had little success in the urban areas, as was shown in the general election of April 1965, when it actually lost seats there. Accordingly, the party took advantage of Dillon's ill-health to replace him with Cosgrave who had once remarked that Fine Gael should be 'left of centre'.

As a result of the change the most hopeful element in the party was its left-wing led by Declan Costello, son of John, an able lawyer but politically a pure idealist. His leftism is that of the American Democratic Party, and he has never gone beyond that party's position on external affairs; it was his initiative that gave the government the excuse to haver on neutrality. Nonetheless, after bye-election defeats, in May 1964, he produced for his party eight points on which to base a Social Democratic policy. These urged an economic 'Plan' (instead of a 'Programme'), under a Minister for Economic Affairs, that would involve direction of private as well as public concerns, control of banking, state involvement in industry, price control and welfare schemes, financed by direct, rather than indirect, taxation. This crypto-policy was essentially one of economic reform rather than the plan for social transformation that would be needed to put such a scheme into operation. It was little more than the ideas of a liberally-minded bureaucrat. It ignored rural problems. (Costello added one point on this matter to appease Dillon.) It avoided the issues of international trade and finance (although Costello's ally, Garrett Fitzgerald, is an ardent Common Marketeer). It ignored the reality of capitalist property relations. All these weaknesses were merely magnified in Fine Gael's programme, *Towards a Just Society*, as produced for the General Election Campaign of March-April 1965. Although the 'plan' remains, such effectiveness as it

had is to be reduced. 'Control of banking' is interpreted as meaning greater control of currency reserves through the Central Bank. 'State Investment' is dropped quietly. To top its political effectiveness, most of the more possible of its welfare proposals – most lately the de-rating of small farms – are being adopted by the government.

With Dillon's retirement in favour of Liam Cosgrave as party leader, the reformers hoped for better days. They have been disappointed. Cosgrave has followed a policy of 'responsible opposition' which means, in practice, alternating silence and demagoguery. Gerard Sweetman (no friend to Costello) is in charge of organization. On specific issues, the party has failed similarly to protect itself. It sat on the fence over the issue of the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Area. Its detailed policy on the Irish language is an uneasy compromise between Dillon's original proposals and the language vote. Its most ambitious policy yet, on education, urges merely the revival of the Council of Education, albeit in triplicate, subsidies for free secondary education (which was in its essentials, promptly adopted by the government), and mild encouragement for parent-teacher associations. Such of its proposals on agriculture that have appeared (other than entry to E.E.C.) bear the traces of the thought of the bourgeois wing. The party's Local Government policy is clearly a weaker form of that of Labour and Sinn Féin. In these circumstances it is not surprising that Declan Costello should allow himself to be guided by his health into preparing to leave politics. He leaves the leadership of the Fine Gael left to three men. Most notable is Thomas O'Higgins, the younger, an amiable man, and almost a successful Presidential candidate in 1966, who learned something about Health during his eleven years as party spokesman on it, but who now speaks on finance. The other Dail leader is Richie Ryan, an amiable lightweight noted mainly for his campaign against fluoridation on 'medical' grounds; he is spokesman on Health and Social Welfare. And in the Seanad sits Garrett Fitzgerald, son of Desmond Fitzgerald, a statistician of considerable ability, who has dedicated his talents to serve the ruling elite. All three are faced by a seemingly insoluble problem: what is possible in their proposals can be used by Fianna Fail; what is impossible can be exposed; they cannot advocate the possibilities inherent in Labour.

The same difficulty faces the smaller conservative groups. None of these has yet won a seat. On the one hand are the Christian parties, Problachta Christoiuil and (the second) Cumann na Poblachta, whose policies are the latest developments of the teachings



of Fahey and Hanley. On the other hand is the newly-formed Irish Liberal Party, which is interesting mainly because it brings to public notice fissile tendencies that have been developing for some time within the lay establishment.

However, it now seems that Fine Gael will be in a position after the next general election, where no single party can command a majority in Dail Eireann, in which it can offer coalition terms to the Labour Party.

In fact, Fianna Fail may be trying to lose the next general election and to leave a possible inter-party (which will be, of course, capitalist) Government to carry out the unpopular tasks necessary to maintain Irish capitalism, or, at least to ruin things, so that the electorate will turn back with relief to the 'army of destiny'.

## II

### *The Catholic Church*

The lay establishment's gradual recognition of the need for economic growth is a factor stimulating re-assessment of Church-State relations. Under present conditions of technology, economic expansion depends on educational efficiency. In turn, this necessitates a careful consideration of the Irish education system.

In the past decade, (and especially since de Valera's retirement to the Presidency), there have been many such surveys. Most notable is the officially sponsored, comprehensive *Investment in Education* which appeared in December 1965. These reports give the facts that show that Irish education must be reformed. In 1962-1963, out of 17,459 National school leavers, 28% had passed the Primary school certificate examination, 8% had failed it, 10% were absent from it and 54% were unaccounted for. The causes for this have been made apparent. Two-thirds of Irish National schools (mainly rural ones) involve the employment of not more than two teachers. Thus, there is a discrepancy between the low pupil-teacher ratio of many rural schools and the overcrowding in schools in urban areas. Some 76% of national schools have 38% of the pupils and employ 50% of the teachers. What is more, such one-teacher schools are generally ill-equipped: 39% of one-teacher and 34% of two-teacher schools have drinking water. The proportion of schools with flush toilets is still smaller.



According to Senator Sean Brosnahan of the I.N.T.O., 700 Irish schools are sub-standard. The curriculum is also a handicap. Whereas Ireland has the shortest school week in Europe, it gives the largest time (50% more than in Spain) to religious instruction. It is scarcely surprising that the teachers are getting increasingly frustrated and that their frustrations are leading more frequently to open opposition to clerical, as well as to lay, authority.

At the apprenticeship level, a new industrial training authority has proclaimed the insufficient training of the bulk of Ireland's 12,349 apprentices.

In these circumstances, the Department of Education has not restricted itself to investigations. In 1958, female National Teachers were again allowed to be married. In 1963, it imposed a reform of the mathematics course and attempted to bridge the gap between vocational and secondary education by joint exam papers and a new system of comprehensive schools to serve isolated areas. Helped by the introduction of Telefis Eireann in 1962, it has encouraged the increased use of audio and visual aids in teaching. In 1964, it initiated grants for school libraries. In 1967, reforms in English text books have been announced. A Language Institute has been set up to improve teaching in this sphere. The Primary Certificate has been replaced by a system of record cards. A system of pilot schools for educational aids has been announced. Under the Second Programme, it is policy to raise the school-leaving age to 15 by 1970. The first decisive step towards this was the introduction of a subsidy towards free places at secondary schools. This has been extended to grants to university students.

Yet education policy remains vague on too many points. There is much unofficial scepticism, shared by many teachers, as to the possibility of expanding staff to meet the needs of the new year of compulsory pupils by 1970.

And the claims of education are being advanced hesitantly. The essential irrelevance of the Manager system remains unassailed by public policy. The replacement of lay teachers by clerics in the secondary schools run by the orders increased in rate (in January 1968 46.2% of male teachers in these schools were lay, 38.2% of female teachers were). Furthermore a powerful rearguard action mounted by sections of the clergy against even such necessary reforms as were being introduced was met, at first, by fabian tactics. In 1965-1966, the Bishop of Galway Dr Michael Browne, denounced the policy of fusing the smaller schools as being detrimental to the authority of parish school managers. The then Minister

for Education, George Colley, answered defensively and moved to the Department of Industry and Commerce. His successor, Donach O'Malley, was bolder, however. A reluctance amongst clerical teaching orders about entering his subsidized free education scheme was denounced by him openly in the Seanad. Now 93% of such schools have entered the plan. However, it is not yet clear on what terms they have done so; except that there is a proviso for the parents of the pupils concerned to make 'voluntary' grants to eke out the subsidies. It seems likely, also, that the numbers of such entrants do not include the most celebrated schools of all. Also, the Protestant secondary schools, with their higher costs from the payment of their teachers, appear discontented. O'Malley's last move to amalgamate T.C.D. and U.C.D. (inherited by his successor, Brian Lenihan) has caused most concern amongst the dons involved. However, it looks, in practice, like a somewhat shady compromise by which the archiepiscopal ban on Trinity will be removed, whilst the Church gains a control over it through a governing body weighted with Catholics.

The comparative timorousness (as over the dismissal of John McGahern for writing a banned book) of the teaching organizations is for clear reasons. Their subordinate position in Irish education is allied to their long tradition of conservatism. The latter has been reinforced, if anything, since T. J. O'Connell's retirement as Secretary of I.N.T.O. in 1948. Governmental timorousness is motivated less obviously. It seems fairly reasonable, however, that the Irish establishment is torn two ways on education: it needs educational reform; it fears to shake the position of the most effective conservative force in the Republic.

Thus, one finds great agitation on the part of members of the establishment on what are essentially fringe changes in Irish education, most notably the teaching of the Irish language. Since those who capitalize on Irish culture are operating within the lay establishment, an attack on their interests would be less catastrophic to it than an attack on those of organized religion.

But educational necessity is only one force working against Catholic power in Ireland. In 1957, an attempt to use the courts to censor the stage came to nothing, and the successful use of archiepiscopal power to prevent theatrical performances in 1958 and 1959 has proved to be an isolated example, at least in Dublin. In January 1962 Telefis Eireann began operations. It was an encouragement for ownership of many television sets. These can be adjusted (if in the north or east) to take British programmes. And even T.E. programmes offer some, though at times crude, alterna-

tive to Catholic culture. The film censorship has also been relaxed as regards adult showings. The book censorship is to be amended to limit bans to twenty year periods and to extend the right of appeal. A Constitutional Commission has advised for the legalization of divorce. A new group centred on the magazine *Grille*, is trying to establish a genuine Christian Socialism.

There are signs that elements in the Catholic Church are trying to adapt it to the new atmosphere. Since 1958, the reign of John XXIII and the conciliar movement have provided new excuses for such activities. *Hibernia* has been given a more liberal format. Fr Peter Connolly of Maynooth has criticized the censorship objectively. Bigotry (clerical and lay) has to operate in public. In 1965, the Archbishop of Dublin found it necessary to set up a Public Relations Office. In April, 1967, an ecclesiastical Communications Centre was set up in his Archdiocese. In 1966, the Bishop of Clogher tried unsuccessfully to ban post midnight dances in his diocese. In 1968 an advisory council of the laity was set up in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

Yet these facts cannot conceal the determination of the Catholic hierarchy to exert its power whenever possible as arbitrarily as before. For an Irish Catholic, attendance at Dublin University is still a mortal sin unless the Archbishop of Dublin has given it his permission (though this may change if O'Malley's plan materializes). In 1958, Brendan Behan's *Borstal Boy* was banned (though it has since been adapted to the stage and was shown at the Abbey Theatre). John McGahern has lost his basic means of livelihood for extra-curricula reasons. The Archbishop of Dublin has shown greater readiness to innovate in the spheres of public relations and mass media than in matters that encouraged greater lay participation. As late as May, 1967, a three month prison sentence was imposed on a contraceptives vendor. The plight of Biafra (where Irish Catholic missionaries have a traditional stake) gave the Church an opportunity to regain popularity, aided by independent newspapers. However, this was, in effect, countered by the papal encyclical on contraception.

It is not, therefore, surprising that sectors of the lay establishment should press more actively for a further reduction in clerical power. In December, 1966, a Censorship Reform Society was initiated. In July, 1967, a new body 'reform' was founded to end corporal punishment in schools; in June, 1968, it got a Christian Brother sued for cruelty and got a shilling damages for its plaintiffs. In the following October a Dublin Humanist Association was begun. What may be most significant is the founding, the pre-

vious March, of an Irish Liberal Party, whose most distinctive aims seem to be a mixture of anticlericalism and L.F.M. such bodies have already given the government the excuse to reform the book censorship; they may encourage it to further harden its secularization policies.

In the circumstances, it is just conceivable that the Catholic Church might turn to advocacy of the Encyclicals of the 1960's on behalf of a new Christian Socialist movement. However, this would be more likely than it is but for two things. Firstly, reforms have to be made in Irish education and such reforms must weaken clerical managerial authority. Secondly, it is difficult to see such a movement being radical enough to overwhelm the protest of the establishment parties.

However Irish Catholic power remains strong, although threatened. Accordingly, it can still be counted as a manipulating force in Irish society, and, thus, not yet disruptive. These statements cannot be made so definitely of the next class to be considered.

### III

#### *The small capitalists*

Dealing with this class currently, as before, one is handicapped by its essential fluidity. Under present conditions it can be said that its more efficient members will tend to merge with larger (foreign or home) firms, while the less efficient ones are forced out of business. This will apply to both small manufacturers and to small shopkeepers. The first have to meet steadily increasing competition from abroad. Since 1963, the second have had their profit margins – already lower than those of their British equivalents – hurt by a turnover tax, while the new trade produced in areas of economic growth has declined in the conditions of the Second Programme.

In October 1966 the Irish Management Institute published a survey that discovered that firms employing less than 500 showed little interest in marketing or in work study, and tended to promote by age. Part of the reason for this is that there is less incentive than previously for the enterprising worker to set himself up in business. To counteract this tendency, Colley has given grants specifically to small industries, and the I.D.A. set up, in December



1967, a special small industries division to encourage industries employing thirty people or less, but this latter service was reserved for rural areas.

However, the lack of petty bourgeois enterprise allied to the small capitalist class's traditional politics and individualism has left it incompetent to organize against the major parties. As a result it declines steadily, in its interests, amorphously and anonymously.

#### IV

#### *The farmers*

Between 1953 and 1961 Exchequer aid for farmers almost trebled. Between 1958 and 1966 it more than doubled. Despite this, Ireland's rural population declined from 46% of the total in 1946 to 38% in 1956 and 34% ten years later. The percentage of the national income absorbed by the agricultural sector fell to 21% in the latter year. The percentage of national output supplied by it fell to 22%. Yet agricultural products still made up 56% of all Irish exports.

Under capitalist programming it is as clear as ever before that the blame lies with the Irish lay establishment and the imperialism to which it is harnessed. Of course, it can be argued that the actual small farmers are doomed anyway by the unpleasant conditions of their existence. It remains true that policy of the government has continued the errors that marked the agricultural schemes of most of its predecessors.

In so far as the programmes favour agricultural interests, they favour those of the ranchers and (albeit less) of the medium farmers. In *Economic Development*, Whitaker dismissed the production of agricultural goods other than cattle. The second Programme provided for a 43% increase in the number of cows coupled with a 17% reduction in human farm population: a transformation unseen in scale since the Hungry Forties. In 1964, a subsidy scheme for heifers (since withdrawn) encouraged excessive ranch breeding of calves (at a time of glut to boot) and struck thereby at the small farmers' major trading support. As yet the outstanding financial aid to the actual smallholders has been Haughey's gesture in his first Budget of placing them on the dole and



the similar grant the next year to small farmers (albeit on a viability basis).

Professor Joseph Johnston has remarked on the care given to the tourist roads in Co. Mayo as compared with the neglect of the ways leading to the fishing villages where people live and work. The relief of the west is expected similarly to be effected by the Government's uprooting of two Departments (Education and Lands) and sending them thither, and by the movement of the State-sponsored Gaeltacht company, Gaeltarra Eireann, to Co. Donegal (where it should have been, anyway).

The small farmers are hurt by other results of policy. Continuing dependence on the British market places Ireland as a whole in the position of the smallholders vis-à-vis the buyers of their calves, and thus further weakens the position of the former. Inflation (aided by the turnover tax) has meant that between 1955 and 1967 the prices paid by the farmer for his commodities have risen by between 50% and 110%.

But it is government land policy that exposes its agriculture failings. The basic problem of Irish agriculture has been remarked on by *Economic Development* as 'generally speaking the larger the farm size, the smaller output and income per acre, the smaller the income per £100 total output, but the larger the income per unit of labour'. The large farmer has a greater ability to command capital and machinery and to plan the working of a greater area of land than the small man can control. But he need not use these advantages as effectively as the latter must use his. His market is, with all its faults, larger and more certain than the latter's for reasons of transport and history. Thus Irish agriculture has to grapple with problems of markets and the productivity needed to develop them, the latter including not only mechanisation but the inefficiency and conservatism bred by a system of farm-ownership under primogeniture.

The Land Act of 1965 deals with these problems in a conservative fashion. One of its aims is to provide for farm units that can support their owners and his family. The government made it clear then that the one definite qualification of viability was a minimum size of 45 acres. No attempt has made to suggest a maximum size. Nor for years, was there any suggestion of a connection between farm size and farm fertility, possibly because a national soil survey has only recently been begun. Yet when An Foras Taluntais operated such a survey in west County Cork, it reported in 1963 that at least one seventeenth of the farms under 30 acres were viable holdings as were half the farms of 30-100

acres. This was in a notably infertile area and one where farmers are excluded, often by sheer ignorance, from claiming subsidies to which they are entitled. In the better land of counties Meath and Kildare the proportions of viable small farms could be much higher. One achievement of the much denounced national agricultural council was to establish viability as the yardstick for farm efficiency.

Admittedly, the 45 acre farmer will find it easier than will the smaller man to make savings by large-scale planning and to buy machinery (though inflation makes even this doubtful). Even so, dependence on the principle of the minimum farm size involves the reduction of the numbers of farmers. Thus, the Second Programme may exceed its norm at least in agricultural depopulation.

The needs of productivity are not entirely against depopulation. Under conditions of absolute ownership, primogeniture has left too large a proportion of Irish soil in unenterprising hands, often of single elderly women. It may be partly for this reason that, although between 1950 and 1960 agricultural productivity rose by 50% as against industry's rise of 28.5%, the former increase was less than the average rise for all O.E.C.D. countries.

The Land Act endeavoured to deal with this problem in a characteristically bureaucratic spirit. The elderly farmer is offered an annuity to enable him to retire. Efficient landholders are offered loans to buy land to expand their farms. Later, in 1964 in a Succession Bill, an attempt was made to attack the principle of primogeniture. The lawyers; Fine Gael; the N.F.A. and sections of Fianna Fail itself united to denounce this betrayal of the freedom of testation. The Act passed with primogeniture unchanged.

Under such a government it is scarcely surprising that agrarian economists like Joseph Johnston and Raymond Crotty are advocating that real land values be related to ownership by maintaining and expanding the *conacre* (eleven-month rent) system. This policy is perfectly feasible. However, it has qualities of atomism and social divisiveness that prevent it from being the best possible. For that one must look elsewhere.

In the Parish of Glencolumbkille, County Donegal, the priest, Fr James McDyer, set himself to combat the emigration of his congregation. He organized the expansion of the area's facilities and encouraged production of vegetables on his parishioners' 12-acre smallholdings. This was not enough; by 1961 his parish saw the departure of the last of its unmarried girls between the ages of 16 to 36. More ambitious schemes were needed. Already a proposal for a parish marketing co-operative had failed because of

government opposition. Now McDyer made a new attempt. He offered to sell a greater supply of vegetables to a private canning company. The offer was rejected. However, aided by his Bishop and by the veteran Socialist Republican, Peadar O'Donnell, he signed a contract to sell vegetables on a large-scale with the then Chairman of the Irish Sugar Company, Major-General Michael Costello. Helped by money supplied by emigrants from Donegal, he supervised the co-operative working of a few plots of land to grow the vegetables on an economic basis. The scheme has been a success. The collective has been expanded throughout the parish. It has made economics of production such as no 45-acre farm could. The Charlestown Conference has developed to expand the Glencolumbkille ideal throughout the small farm areas. In May 1965, Fr McDyer was elected to the Committee of the I.A.O.S. In September, 1966 he was released from parish work to act full time in the cause of co-operation.

Governmental reaction has been less than enthusiastic. The Small Farms Committee that is to decide the fate of the western regions insists in giving grants to individual farms rather than to communities. Its sub-committee set up to look into the formation of similar 'pilot area' schemes elsewhere in the west turned down Fr McDyer's proposals as 'involving too much regimentation'. It also advised to continue the individualist nature of the grants even within the pilot areas. A grant for a food processing factory for Glencolumbkille was allowed only on condition that 50% of the products were exported and was then held up for two years. The Sugar Company's subsidiary, Erin Foods Ltd., that markets Glencolumbkille's vegetables was losing money so that it found it necessary to associate with Britain's H. J. Heinz Co. to expand the export market. Lemass' stated policy for the west (which his successors are continuing) does not go beyond the pilot areas as far as co-operation is concerned. And in September-October 1966, Costello was forced to resign as Chairman of the Sugar Company.

But co-operation has to be extended. It is the best way for the farmers to obtain markets for their produce and offers them some security in them. Thus in 1961, the Report of a Commission Concerning Small Western Farms urged the encouragement of the co-operative spirit in its area of reference. In 1964, another report, of the American expert, Dr Joseph Knapp, urged the greater encouragement of the co-operative spirit in the I.A.O.S. The government itself is prepared to encourage co-operation as long as it does not override property 'rights'. Thus the Knapp report is accepted en-

thusiastically. In the west, however, the state's attitude towards the small farms remains that of pilot areas and the I.A.O.S. and Muintir na Tire outside them, while encouraging individual accumulation of land and paying dole to the smallest farmers.

Similar lack of enthusiasm is shown by the administration as regards the valuable work done by a Muintir na Tire survey group in Co. Limerick. Begun in 1958, it gained an immediate and valuable stimulus from a paper read by Dr Jeremiah Newman of Maynooth seminary. He pointed out that similar investigations in Britain and in the Netherlands showed that urban growth was encouraged by lack of rural amenities. He deduced that it would appear that a balanced population can only be maintained by the creation of ('rurban areas') of large village units on a six mile radius of towns of 1,000 population. The survey's annual reports have vindicated this view and thus provided both a valuable complement to the Glencolumbkille ideal and an important argument for the expansion of light industry.

Economics seem to have limited the project to its single county. Although the government has at last set on foot Soil and Ordinance Surveys, it has done nothing to establish a National Social Survey to do for the whole national area what the Limerick Survey has done for its County. Otherwise its policy is somewhat schizophrenic. Until December 1966, it appeared to have replaced the old politics of general distribution of industry by ones of concentration on large industrial estates in a very limited number of areas, starting with Shannon Airport and, now, with the cities of Galway and Waterford. However, Colley has initiated his small industries branch of the I.D.A. to attempt to reverse this policy slightly. Whether industries employing less than thirty people can be supplied in sufficient numbers to adequately employ the populace of 'rurban' area centres is another matter. Also, without a National Survey, there can be no criteria for industrial distribution. Yet, earlier in December 1966, Nathaniel Lichfield, government-appointed planner for the Limerick area produced his own plan; it ignored the work of the Survey.

The small farmers' reaction to their predicament has changed over the past decade. In 1957, they were still ready to ally with the Populism of Sinn Fein. In the same year, Father John Fahey, a veteran of the anti-annuity agitation, participated in the founding of Lia Fail (Stone of Destiny), a movement directed against land purchases by foreigners. These moves were doomed to frustration. The failure of the Sinn Fein T.D.'s to take their seats or, indeed, to do anything constructive for their constituents resulted



in their defeat in the general election of October, 1961. Similarly, Lia Fail has been isolated and unable to combat the tendencies that move the small farmer to ally with the forces of the right.

One of these was the continuance of the N.F.A. However, this was encouraged by the increasing distress of the larger farmers. In 1958, the U.K. reduced its quota of Irish butter. In 1959, its entry to E.F.T.A. involved its reduction of tariffs on Danish dairy and pig produce. The ensuing agricultural depression was partially ended by a new Anglo-Irish trade agreement the following year. However, in 1964, the new British Labour government imposed unilaterally a 10% import levy that covered Irish products. The Anglo-Irish Free Trade Area agreement benefited mainly the abattoirs and the textile factories. At the same time many large farmers suffered from inflation and the fall of real agricultural prices. They became increasingly concerned to help the small farmer as their most possible and numerous ally. The N.F.A. pushed ahead with co-operative cattle marts despite the protests of the livestock exporters. In 1958, it initiated a supplementary farm credit scheme in co-operation with the banks. In February, 1964, it published its *Green Book* which included a special section devoted to reform to aid the small farmer. Its leaders denounced the foreign purchase of lands until such purchases were more rigorously controlled in October, 1964.

At the same time, a number of business interests have moved to help the farmers, such a step being better business. It was natural, in 1958, for Gouldings, the fertilizer firm, to offer farmers special credit terms. The next year, the banks co-operated with the A.C.C. and the N.F.A. to carry out the latter's comprehensive credit plan.

These factors, allied to the natural mistrust felt by rural property-owners for organized labour, encouraged the rightward political move of the small farmers. In October, 1959, it was justified by Fine Gael's choice of James Dillon as Parliamentary Leader and, later as Party President. Under his leadership Fine Gael augmented its strength in the small farm areas. It swallowed Clann na Talmhan. In the General election of April 1965, its gains in the west almost offset its urban losses. But Dillon's prompt retirement and the succession to him of Liam Cosgrave's more urban figure seems to have weakened the trend. In June 1966, the majorities gained for T. F. O'Higgins's Presidential candidacy were predominantly urban. In the following December Fine Gael did no more than hold its vote in bye-elections in Co. Waterford and South Co. Kerry. But in 1967 the party did make major gains in the lo-



cal elections outside Dublin City, though these appear to be the focal rationalizing of Dillonite popularity at the expense of minor groups.

But the true expressor of farmer-conservatism is the National Farmers' Association. Its basic weaknesses remain unchanged. Led by the larger farmers, it tries to help the small holder on their terms. It accepted the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Area, and its line on the E.E.C. is the same as Fine Gael. It needs must support Glencolumbkille, but it certainly does not consider its example worthy of emulation. Indeed, its concept of co-operation is guided by the vertical commodity marketing principle of the I.A.O.S. It is not anti-rancher, only anti-foreign rancher. It backs the exporter of cattle against the exporter of meat. It accepts the minimum farm size, and one, at least, of its more prominent figures looks forward openly to the 100-acre average farm unit. Towards urban labour its leaders and supporters have appeared generally antipathetic and they have openly supported government-imposed wage freezes, without mentioning profits. All this amounts to mere aspects of the N.F.A.'s essential respectability. Its 'Small Farms Development Plan' is an attempt to help the small farmer without hurting the larger one: in fact by keeping the former in a subordinate position. Its other demands express its desire to restore and to formalize (by rancher-dominated marketing boards, most notably in meat) the big farmers' old alliance within the establishment. But that now includes the new business groups (notably the slaughterers) whose interests lie in exploiting even the large farmers and who are nearer the government than they.

But there are smaller bodies whose demands and tactics push the N.F.A. further than it would like. They are the commodity organizations, the Irish Beet-Growers' Association and, most importantly, the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association. The latter body clashes most often with the N.F.A. By it, it is denounced as sectional and as 'catering for a minority' although, on both Associations' estimated membership figures, it seems only to have 22,000 members less than its rival. It had, also, the prestige of employing as its adviser Raymond Crotty, perhaps Ireland's greatest agrarian economist. This is not to say that its demands are exceptionally progressive. In fact they do not go beyond the essentially Distributist development of Clann na Talmhan theory, in a demand for graduated government subsidies to benefit the small dairy farmer. But the Association has been naturally ready to embarrass the government.

In May 1966, the I.C.M.S.A.'s action in picketing Dail Eireann won its members an increase in the price of milk. This success helped galvanize the N.F.A. into activity. In October it organized a number of protest marches from all agricultural regions to converge on Dublin, where it staged a sit-down outside the Department of Agriculture. The following January N.F.A. members blocked roads with their agricultural machinery. They were ordered to pay fines for obstruction and imprisoned when they refused. Against this counter-attack the Association organized a rates strike and a strike in supplies of agricultural commodities. Now they are boycotting a newly-established National Agricultural Council because it does not recognize their claims for dominant representation thereon. However, the I.C.M.S.A., the I.B.A.A. and General Costello (a vigorous critic of economic policy since October 1966) have taken seats. Meanwhile the Government impounded the goods of N.F.A. members in lieu of fines and backpayment of rates, thus forcing the N.F.A. to end its 'no-rates' campaign. As a final move, the N.F.A. claims to be turning its attention to a full scale National Co-operative Agricultural Marketing Organization, through an Agricultural Development Trust. Yet the government seems determined to maintain the fight. It has passed an Act giving the Minister for Agriculture powers over the livestock marts. And this was supported by the N.A.C. Since then it has removed N.F.A. nominees from Agricultural boards. In return, the N.F.A. (backed by Fine Gael-dominated rural councils) has taken over the Beet Growers' Association and removed its representative from the N.A.C. This success has led to a new front with the I.C.M.S.A. against the government. The organizations are in a strong position. Though the N.F.A.'s aim (to keep the small farmer from coveting its leaders' lands) is the same as the government's, it can offer the farmers more. The government had to balance the claims of an urban labour too.

The farmers are thus divided, and not according to interest. This is by their own errors as much as anything. The fact should not be welcomed. Wrong-headed though their attitudes (and those of such supporters as General Costello) may be, their struggle has shaken the Irish Establishment. It should be supported, critically, by all with an interest in that group's defeat. However, complete support (through such bodies as the workers-farmers credit movement, Dochas) should be given the collectives. They attack the property nexus; they are thus a force for rural liberation.

As regards Irish fisheries, the outlook is slightly less grim. Dur-

ing Erskine Childers's period (1957-1959) at the Department of Lands and, later, (1961-1964) when Brian Lenihan was Under-Secretary there, the administration of the Department of Fisheries was rationalized and grants to fishermen increased. Also, it is one sphere where co-operation in production has been able to develop swiftly. Unfortunately, these changes remain inadequate for Irish seafishing. It is still under-capitalized, and has far to expand before it can compete adequately with foreign trawling interests. (France's Credit Naval Loan of £5,000,000 and Norway's £3,000,000 Loan to B.I.M. may help repair this). Yet, between 1963 and 1967 fish sales rose 35%.

V

*Labour*

It is fair to say that the N.F.A.'s denunciations of the working-class have some economic basis. The latter was hurt by inflation absolutely less than the farmers. Between 1960 and 1966, while the latter had the real value of their prices steadily eroded, industrial wages per hour rose by 43.6% as against a rise in consumer prices of 16.9%.

Even so, the urban wage-earner remains a member of a manipulated class. Its share of the national income is declining; between 1958 and 1961 profits rose by 46% as against the wages rise of 24%: between 1960 and 1966 they rose by 54%. In October, 1967, Ireland's total manufacturing wage level was revealed as Europe's lowest. After a sudden drastic rise between 1958 and 1960, the Republic's total H.P. debt has fallen steadily.

Between 1958 and 1965, the government experimented with uncontrolled prices only to be forced to restore controls in July 1965, as a reaction against a developing price spiral. The latter was itself encouraged, in part, by government policy with its tendency towards reducing direct in favour of indirect taxation. The most obvious move in this direction is the inclusive 2.5% turnover tax, introduced in 1963. In addition, a selective 5% wholesale tax has been imposed in June 1966 and taxes on spending have risen in successive budgets since 1957. Thus, although wages in Ireland are (understandably) lower than wages in Britain, the cost of living is somewhat higher.

The discrepancy between the general level of public spending and its level on specific social welfare schemes has been mentioned already. Furthermore, whereas Italy has a per capita income equal to that of Ireland, its spending on social welfare is nearly 50% higher. The Second Programme promised large scale increases in social welfare such as would further extend civil service powers. But these increases have had to have their scope reduced because of the unprogrammed recession.

That the recession had this result is more significant in that, though unemployment decreased during the first six years of programming; it has risen steadily since then and stands now at its 1958 figure.

But the regime's most important social failure has been in housing. Under Neil Blaney, Minister for Local Government from 1958 to 1966, bureaucratic capitalism is revealed in all its illogicality. In 1958, ground rent was restricted to one sixth of the gross. Then, in 1960, rent restriction was ended for many dwellings. The former distorted the free enterprise price system: the latter pandered to it. With the restriction of ground rent allied to the continuing rural exodus to Dublin, demand for houses exceeded the supply and ground landlords had no incentive to let land for building. Two other factors complicated matters. Government policy involved the freedom of companies to build offices. They offered a better rent than housing did. At the same time, productive investment did not include investment in housing. Although, under the second Programme, the numbers of houses built doubled, Ireland has remained less productive in this sphere than most other countries, who have similarly increased their house building from a greater starting-figure. In 1964, fewer houses were built in the Republic of Ireland than in the north-east. In 1965, the increase in building was the lowest in Europe. In 1966-1967, the numbers fell slightly. (Since then they have risen slightly.) The situation provided a new excuse for bureaucratic expansion. Already, a Planning Act had effectively weakened local control over environment by ordering the ill-equipped local authorities to plan swiftly or surrender power. Now, in 1965, though a Housing Act provided £20,000,000 to raise the house-building average, it used the same techniques to centralize the direction of daily policy. Few who have considered the local problem are in any doubt that this means, in practice, bureaucratic imposition of out-dated zoning techniques (themselves invoked to try to regulate the price of land) and the resultant moving of population to suburbs and increased commuting. It may build houses, but since ground rents are still pegged and no sub-



stitute is offered save a doubtful plan to expand their purchase by the ground tenants, this will be handicapped. And whatever may be said against Sean T. O'Ceallaigh and Tadgh Murphy, their plans of urban renewal resulted in house-building where the need was greatest: not on virgin ground.

Finally, there is a point not necessary to the Programmes but significant about their anti-worker bias. Unlike in Britain, workers' co-operatives do not receive tax concessions.

In these circumstances, the fact (mentioned in the English journal *Psychiatry* recently) that Ireland has the highest rate of hospitalized mental illness in the world does not amaze one.

More rational is the fact that there has developed in Ireland since 1963 a considerable rise in the volume of labour unrest. In 1965, more man hours were lost than in any one year since 1945. In 1964 and 1965, Ireland had the highest rate of strikes in the (tabulated) world: in 1966, it had the third highest.

The government reacted. In July, 1966, a Department of Labour was founded. Its first Minister, Dr Patrick Hillery, had already spread word of proposals for closer state control of worker-management relations. These included the up-grading of the Labour Court to be a Court of final appeal, with all officials appointed by the Department of Labour and its verdicts to be related mainly to the 'National Interest'. Other proposals would limit the legality of the strike to occasions where it had been passed by secret ballot, treble the cost of the negotiating licence and prevent trade union expelees from entering a new union for six months.

Official trade union reaction was cautious at first. Talks proceeded with Hillery. They were said to have managed to dispense with the Labour Court proposals. However, the most significant idea that has appeared from the talks was a revival of the unconstitutional proposals of the 1941 Trade Union Act. This would limit negotiating and striking powers in any industry to unions representing 60% of the workers therein. On this being publicized, the rank and file reacted so that the trade union leadership had to withdraw from the discussions.

The initial cause for this was the fact that, on February 10th, 1959, the Provisional United Trade Union Organization gave place to an Irish Congress of Trade Unions. This unites fully both C.I.U. and I.T.U.C.; British-based trade unions are represented only according to the numbers of their Irish members. To preserve this unity has tended to be the chief aim of the left wing of the I.C.T.U. As a result, member unions whose official policy



might alienate militants can count on a wide latitude. Another event strengthened this tendency. In 1961, the Supreme Court decided (*Educational Company of Ireland v Fitzpatrick*) that picketing to maintain a closed shop might be unconstitutional. Accordingly, the I.C.T.U. strengthened its authority to protect those of its affiliated unions that were, for any reason, threatened by rivals 'poaching' of their members. Similarly, in 1963 it declared itself hostile to breakaway union bodies. However, in an attempt to protect union membership as well as unions, it established, also, a body to hear appeals from disaffected trade unionists.

And the establishment itself offers inducements to trade union leaders to act 'responsibly' (towards it). The creation first of the C.I.O., then of the N.I.E.C. gave them permanent officialdom within. During his two years (1962-1964) in Ireland, Dr Edward Nevin never heard a trade union official use the term 'just strike', however good the cause.

Increased conservatism under present conditions has encouraged what the I.C.T.U. leaders are trying to avoid. Poaching and breakaway trade unions appear with maximum publicity. In 1962, the E.T.U.(I) was expelled for poaching though it has amalgamated since then with an affiliated union, and has gained re-admission thereby. In 1963, a National Busmen's Union was formed from busmen disaffected with the I.T.G.W.U. In 1965, an Irish Telephonists' Association was formed of telephonists similarly disgruntled with the Post Office Workers' Union. In 1966, an Irish Post Office Officials' Association appeared, composed of other breakaways, and with, as its Secretary, the redoubtable Jack MacQuillan. The influence of these unions (despite the 'one big union' ideal) has encouraged militancy among the members of the older bodies and has forced the bureaucrats thereof into reluctant activity.

Another factor in trade union militancy has been the open hostility of certain companies brought in under the Programmes – most notably the American E.I.C.O., at the Shannon Estate.

The workers' importance would be stronger had they any clear political alternative to the lay establishment. As it is, the majority of them vote Fianna Fail, and even Fine Gael's working class vote seems comparable to that of the Labour Party.

This is the more regrettable in that it is the workers as a class who have the fewest vested interests in preserving the present system. Farmers and petty bourgeoisie are propertied classes that possess definite stakes in it. Thus, although they may be hurt by its working out, they will not try to alter the social structure. The small farmer fears for his one remaining probable market, and, as

yet, dislikes the idea of co-operative working of his land. That it is his land, and not a landlord's diminishes his radicalism further. The small businessman is inhibited by the fact that, as the most obvious product of the present order he would be doomed by its disappearance. Both the last named are the last atomized individuals in contemporary society. The Church may trim to the wind: it cannot change it. Only the worker is subjectively, as well as objectively, opposed to the manipulators. Although sections of the other classes may ally with him, the struggle for social change is primarily his.

In his task he faces major obstacles. Two of these have been mentioned already. Education is controlled by the Church. The trade union leaders' integrity is threatened by circumstance.

And there are the media of mass communication. There are three daily newspapers in Dublin, one in Cork. Of these, the *Irish Press* is the de Valera fief, the *Irish Independent* and the *Cork Examiner* tend toward clerical Fine Gaelism and the *Irish Times* represents well enough the liquid liberalism of a sector of the Protestant bourgeoisie. Of them all, the last-named has the most progressive record in recent years: it has to expand its circulation and looks to the workers to do so. But its radicalism is confused, atomistic and unduly respectable: it fears any extra-parliamentary means of change. The Radio-Television system, Radio-Telefís Éireann, a public corporation since 1960, tends to lean over backwards not to embarrass the government.

When the worker has surmounted these barriers he is faced with the choice of political method. On the one hand, there are the parties that advocate a transformation into Socialism. On the other hand there is Sinn Féin – Clann na Poblachta died in September 1965. Sinn Féin is not a Socialist body, but it includes Socialists who work within it to change society to provide foundations on which Socialism can be built.

By the end of 1961, it was clear that the Republican Campaign of the 1950s had failed. In the general election of October Sinn Féin had lost its four seats in Dail Éireann. Saor Uladh and its associated bodies had disappeared; many of their members joining the Labour Party or the Brownite N.P.D. Finally, on February 26th 1962, the I.R.A. ended its campaign. The movement entered into a period of reappraisal. In 1961 MacLogan was succeeded as President of Sinn Féin by Tomás MacGiolla (Thomas Gill), grandson of an Irish Parliamentary Party M.P. who became secretary to the D.A.T.I. MacGiolla encouraged new men with social ideas to enter the party. This trend was expressed

through the *United Irishman* after January 1965, when Cathal Goulding became editor. All this attracted a number of Socialist intellectuals who had been repelled by the I.W.P. Headed by Dr Roy Johnston they had founded the Wolfe Tone Society in 1963, following the bicentenary of Tone's birth. This society sought to work out a synthesis of Republican Populism and Socialism, and included members of both Sinn Fein and of the working-class parties. But its main appeal has been in fact Republican rather than Socialist: of its founders, Johnston was elected to the Ard-Chomarle of Sinn Fein in November 1966. He has taken a major part in encouraging the party's setting-up of committees to work out new policies and in the deliberations of those committees. The first of these announced a policy for the local elections: a competent piece of rightist Social Democracy. Sinn Fein made no breakthrough in the elections. But perhaps the most important pending policy change is in the moves afoot to end its principle of abstention from Dail Eireann.

But Sinn Fein's essential nature is unchanged. It possesses still a powerful right wing with few social ideas and xenophobic aspirations. And, indeed, the policy of its left is essentially as Populist as that of Fianna Fail in 1931 and Clann na Poblachta in 1947. Johnston and his support base their tactics on the necessity for a national revolution against imperialist control of Ireland, such as will create the circumstances for a Socialist takeover thereof. It is not clear whether they consider such circumstances to be general confusion or a new order that would involve a decisively weakened Irish capitalism. This failing has not prevented the Wolfe Tone Society from working out valuable descriptive analyses of the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Area and of the E.E.C. However, it does inhibit its proposals for avoiding these from exceeding the limits of the traditional Irish capitalist Republicanism that has made such diminishing returns from Irish public opinion.

The Wolfe Tone Society's ten points for a Republican alternative to entry to the E.E.C. make up a rather less radical programme, for its time, than that of the young Fianna Fail. Credit is to be controlled; (The question of 'how' is unanswered); home capital will be repatriated and foreign investment limited; taxation and social security will be reformed equitably; tariffs are promised where necessary; the language restoration will be encouraged to strengthen the Republic culturally. Two new points arise out of growing Republican association with the Charlestown Conference and the farmers' and fishermen's co-operatives; such are to be encouraged and social life must be democratized. How

this will be done after an elitist putsch – such as a purely nationalist revolt must be today – is not stated.

Thus, in practice, the new Leadership is becoming increasingly constitutional, trying to vary its urban appeal between labour and bourgeois. Its concentration is on isolated social problems, such as housing and the nationalization of inland fisheries – an odd contrast to Saor Eire's emphasis on unemployment and annuities. Its motivation is still chauvinist as far as the rank and file are concerned, as is shown by the fact that the greatest mass arrests of members are still made over 'pure' national issues. All this means is that the new Republicans may have a part to play in softening up Irish capitalism in the rural areas and give valuable service in denouncing imperialism. It cannot provide a viable Irish alternative.

However, Sinn Fein's importance does not lie so much in its possible radicalism as in its association with the one remaining unauthorized military organization – the I.R.A. This body's existence ensures that a recognizable Republican Movement is unlikely to be suppressed without civil war. Unfortunately, the ideological confusion of Orthodox Republicans means that the Army Council could direct its forces to remain neutral in a struggle between the Irish State and Irish Socialism. This situation may be met in one of two ways: a Socialist Citizen Army may be revived and/or a Socialist-Republican rapprochement may yet be achieved.

Of the working class bodies in the Republic of Ireland, four are avowedly Communist. Strangely enough, they tend to agree with Johnston in awaiting Republicanism before Socialism, partly because their numbers are certainly too small to achieve Socialism under present circumstances. The Irish Workers' Party (until 1962, the Irish Workers' League) can justify this stand by its officially Utopian concept of Socialism. The other organizations are less logical, as they regard Stalin's Russia, and now Mao's China, as examples of Socialism in the making. The former group is the older of the two and takes an orthodox 'Russian' communist line. Its perennial candidate for Dail Eireann, Michael O'Riordan, loses his deposit each time he contests his chosen constituency. However, it provided a valuable role when, in 1966, it acted as godfather to a new Socialist youth body. This has acted as a stimulus to youth action by itself and similar youth bodies. The other groups are Maoist in theory – the more effective in practice, the less Maoist.

In these circumstances the Labour Party appears to be the probably political instrument for Irish radical change. It represents more real support than any other left-wing body. It has the affilia-



tion of many trade unions for all their leaders' faults, the truest economic expressions of working-class ideals. These affiliations include that of the W.U.I. and, now, of the I.T.G.W.U., the second largest and the largest Irish trade unions. These facts make it impossible to ignore Labour; it is the largest political body orientated to the working-class, such as can, alone, take power for radical objectives.

But will it? Will it not betray the workers, as in 1942, 1948 and 1954? Certainly this is possible, but it is less probable than in the years before 1957.

In March of that year, the catastrophic election result placed Norton in difficulties. He could maintain himself in power only by recourse to his constituency's dominating votes at the annual Party Conference. In March, 1960, he gave up the struggle in favour of Brendan Corish, Minister for Social Welfare in the second Inter-Party Government and possessor of a right-of-centre record.

Corish has proved to be better than expected. His amiable manner conceals an intelligent political mind, vitiated only by lethargy. Not only did he declare in an interview with *Hibernia* in December, 1960, that he would not oppose the Party Conference's decisions, he has acted according to this principle. He has also encouraged the entrance into the party of new men and has encouraged them to take a major part in its working. In October, 1961, the Labour Party gained four seats in Dail Eireann.

But the most decisive step in its advance was its fusion with the National Progressive Democrats in November, 1963. This event was greater than the admission of two deputies; in fact, both lost their seats in the general election of April, 1965. What was important was that Browne's entrance to the party has encouraged the entry of many determined people who are, at once, ready to work for it, opposed to conditions, and sufficiently patient to wait for long enough to ensure a government with a social revolutionary programme.

To this was added the affiliation of the W.U.I. in 1964. The two facts combined to give the party twenty-two seats in the general election of April, 1965. This number is more than at any time since 1927. And it includes five seats in Dublin City, won, mainly, from the Independents elected after the debacle of the second coalition. This is more than it held ever before. The recent affiliation of the I.T.G.W.U. will help it more, as the pin-pricks of the Government against the latter show it recognizes.

The growing strength of the left-wing of the Labour Party has



not been opposed adequately by any sort of organized right. William Norton died in December, 1963,; without him the right has lacked his intelligence, character and prestige. The most sustained claim to lead it was made by Proinsias Mac Aonghusa (Francis MacGuinness) originally a protégé of Corish and, from 1964 to 1966, Vice-Chairman of the Party. His basic philosophy is Social Democratic: the bureaucratic idealism of the left wings of Fianna Fail and of Fine Gael. But he was handicapped from developing it by a vague recognition that the main parties could always out-do the credible aspects of such policies. He pleased no one, found himself too isolated to continue as Vice-Chairman and ended by being expelled from the party in January, 1967. Today, some fear lest Labour's Political Director (a post that itself represents progress), and, since December, 1967, Secretary, Brendan Halligan, might become the new leader of its right-wing. In certain matters, there is evidence for this: Mr Halligan has cosmopolitan tendencies as was shown by his welcome for the Heinz Erin Agreement and his membership of the Irish Council of the European Movement, both expressions of international capitalism. In the Labour Party, the right must be less intellectual than emotional; merely Social Democratic policies will place Labour in relation to Fine Gael, as Fine Gael is to Fianna Fail.

Yet the party appears, still, to be a negative body. Many were alienated from it by its failure not simply to contest the Presidential election of June 1966 but to put across their definite point of view on the matter to any adequate length.

The disappointment was expressed in the bye-elections, in the following December, in County Waterford and south County Kerry where, despite good candidates, Labour finished an ignominious third. Other elements of this negative image included the failure to produce worthwhile and co-ordinated policies. A local government manifesto rather more moderate than Sinn Féin's contributed to a loss of labour seats in the local election, outside Dublin city where it could only increase its vote. Its present draft policies are somewhat to the left of this, but are still unduly limited: notably on credit and agriculture. Mac Aonghusa's expulsion had unpleasant overtones of Skeffington's, which were emphasized duly by the newspapers. And McQuillan's expulsion from the parliamentary Labour Party, and his subsequent resignation from the national body, was still more obvious, since it hit at hopes of growth west of the Shannon.

These apparent faults are merely symptoms of the party's traditional weaknesses. These are being gradually rectified but much

remains to do. A monthly newspaper, *Labour News*, was begun in October, 1965, it was then published as *Labour*, but still no more than a monthly and it has since died. Until the appointment of a Political Director in March 1967, the Party Central Office was staffed by a full-time Party Secretary and typist and various part-time officials. And, although Labour's universities branches are the best of their kind, and there is less hostility to intellectuals than Brian Inglis found in the 1940s, the party has yet to learn how to use in a Socialist fashion the talent that it has.

This is seen in the Oireachtas party. Although its T.D.s do not include relatively as large numbers of inheritors as the bourgeois parties, those it has, notably until December, 1967, Patrick Norton, son of William, tend to provide a jarring contrast to the party as a whole. The parochial attitudes, of T.D.'s, and the unduly easygoing strategy that this encourages has been criticized also. And too many T.D.s are too selfish. When Norton died, his son failed to hold his seat in the subsequent bye-election; fearing potential rivals, his father had failed to put up the 'second string' candidate from a doubtful part of the constituency, such as P.R. necessitates. Yet Patrick Norton refused similarly to take a 'second string' in 1965. Party leaders are aware of this weakness and are combating it. In several speeches, Corish has promised that at least two candidates will fight all constituencies in the next general election. However, Corish himself showed an eagerness shocking to his followers in accepting a rise in Dail salaries in June 1968 and in July 1968 Frank Cluskey T.D. relied on Fine Gael support to be elected Lord Mayor of Dublin.

But, even if the party does grow (alone or in alliance with Sinn Fein) it is faced with many exterior problems. There is education – there is the mass media. More immediately, there are the questions of appeal. The small farmers' continuing hostility to Labour lost MacQuillan his seat in 1965. Fianne Fail has a continuing strong traditional claim on working-class loyalty. Above all there are the superior advantages held by demagogic T.D.s of all or no parties, in promising their constituents anything they want. However, the last general election results seem to show that the parties can outspend independents.

There are further dangers. In 1959, Fianna Fail tried to carry the abolition of P.R. under cover of the Presidential election. De Valera's popularity failed to prevail in this matter against the combined opposition of all other parties and the trade unions. Now the Government is trying not only to abolish P.R. again but to strengthen the representation in its traditional strongpoint, the

west. For it to win this referendum will be a major step towards imposing a catastrophic defeat on the Labour Party.

And it can never be ignored that a military attack could be made to prevent a Labour Government in Ireland. It may come from the Irish Army (as in Greece) or from abroad (as in San Domingo, Cuba, or Vietnam). The latter possibility is likely to increase with foreign investment in Ireland.

All this can be defeated. It is no more than has been defeated elsewhere. It is for the Irish to decide that it should.

## DO THE IRISH WANT INDEPENDENCE?

*If we are intelligent, alert and undaunted, then life will be much better, more generous, more spontaneous, more vital, less basely materialistic. If we fall into a state of funk, impotence and persecution, then things may be very much worse than they are now. It is up to us.*

D.H. Lawrence: *The State of Funk.*

It seems inevitable, now, that one of the two islands off the north-west coast of Europe would exploit the other. In the event, the development of European Feudalism ensured that the larger would exploit the smaller. The rise of capitalism rationalized the exploitation. The Union gave it ultimate political expression.

Thus the struggle for Irish independence was fought in several spheres. Politically, the nation had to fight against its fate being decided as a part of the politics of Great Britain. Religiously, it had to oppose discrimination against the majority of its population. Culturally, it had to oppose the replacement of its language by that of its exploiter. Economically, it had to oppose the export of most of its surplus value, and the reduction of that value by loaned terms of trade.

But this struggle remained one fought within each sphere as though that one was unrelated to the others. The national leadership oscillated between the four aims. As a result, only the religious one was achieved, the cultural ideal seems lost, the economic ideal was compromised and the political ideal, on which in the last resort, the possibilities of the others rested, was saved from immediate compromise only by the refusal of the conservatives and Unionists to give way.

In the result, the political expression of the Irish nation proved to be both more and less than had been expected in 1912. On the one hand, the national reality was recognized far more effectively than 'Home Rule' could have done. On the other hand, it was recognized only for twenty-six of Ireland's thirty-two counties.

Thus British imperialism continued to rule through Ireland's divisions. Politically, the country remained partitioned. Culturally, its provinciality developed apace. Economically, British exploitation remained. To be fair to the new Nationalists, they recognized a relationship between the spheres and tried to explain it. Unfortunately, their explanations remained for the public essentially political. Thus, especially after 1938, they failed to convince the Irish people, as a whole. This is not surprising; partition exists because similar explanations failed to convince the Protestants of Ulster.

For them the Union settlement had meant freedom. Admittedly it was a singularly unpleasant type of freedom, such as could be described as such only by reference to their Catholic neighbours. Nonetheless, the Protestants did so refer to it. Accordingly, to preserve this situation, Northern Ireland was established. So, too, it has been maintained on the support of two-thirds of its population ever since. Against this fact, talk of British Armies of Occupation and the United Irish Nation is irrelevant.

The Northern Irish situation relates to that of the Republic in this much: in both the population are satisfied with the political status quo. The Irish of the Republic may mourn the six counties: some may try to regain them by force. But the existing political settlement can be made an issue only by subordinating it to the economic position.

This is not surprising. There is no doubt that the Republic of Ireland is exploited by Britain. There is no doubt, either, that the Northern Ireland economy is suffering from the continuance of the Union, even if (and this is uncertain) not directly exploited. But, in Ireland, the fact of neo-colonialism has taken on a form peculiar to itself. There are no dictators of the obnoxiousness of Ky or Batista. Instead there is, in the Republic, a bourgeois democratic constitution equal to any, and, in Northern Ireland, a bourgeois democracy, albeit a twisted one. The farmers are not fighting the landlords. Indeed their problems are now such that many of their self-styled friends are suggesting that native landlords might usefully be encouraged. Ireland's home exploiters are bourgeois rather than genteel. Native industry has been expended to a greater extent than in other neo-colonies. Foreign policy gives the appearance of independence. There is no lumpen-proletariat of a scale comparable to those of the shanty suburbs of the Third World. Thus, the contradictions of neo-colonialism take a different form in Ireland (including – other than as regards foreign policy – Northern Ireland) than elsewhere. In each of the Irish semi-na-



tions the internal situation has much in common with that of a metropolitan capitalist state.

Yet the reality remains neo-colonialist. More than since before the Treaty the Irish economy is organized to supply external interests. For this reason 'Social Democracy' (the ideology of benevolent bureaucracy) would be an even greater failure in Ireland than it has been elsewhere. Its one hope would be that it could carry out the radical reforms such as would shake the establishment, but this includes the bureaucracy itself. For the establishment is better off, on the whole, as agent for international capitalism than it would be as organizer of its own brand.

Nor can entry to the E.E.C. help solve Ireland's economic problems. Admittedly, such a move carried out swiftly and unilaterally, would 'break the connection with Britain'. However, in the first place such could not be done under the present establishment: Britain is its link with international capitalism. In the second place, as far as the Republic of Ireland is concerned, the E.E.C. is only likely to be a bigger, and doubtfully, better, Britain. There can be, in practice, little, if any, expansion of the market in Ireland's chief exports. There is little provision for the common upgrading of west European social welfare and, as a result, little has been done towards that end. Politically, and economically Ireland is weaker than any state in, or soon likely to be in, the Community. Above all, the E.E.C. is, despite Gaullism, only marginally less economically subject to America than is Britain. In fact, Ireland's most definite hope is that it may not be worth the Community's while to admit the Republic to full membership.

But programmes of European Social Democracy will be supported by the Irish people for want of anything better. Republican opposition concentrates on one issue, entry to Europe, from which it develops a programme of Republican Social Democracy. But, since 1938, the immediate enemy has been, not the foreigner, but his agents at home, the employers, flanked by altar and filing cabinet. Though entry to the E.E.C. should be opposed (especially, and most probably successfully, if threatening neutrality), the fuel for radical change is most likely to be provided by the home impositions of the Irish Establishment. Outstanding examples thereof are the anti-trade union laws operating in Northern Ireland and being prepared in the Republic. These should be opposed totally, even against potentially compromising Labour leaders, in the name of the Workers' Republic.

What will that be? Is it Socialism? Would it not be more accurate to call it the 'people's' or 'workers' and 'peasants' Republic'?

To answer the last question first, the 'peasants' got 'their' republic, finally, in the 1930's, and it hasn't been much good to them. Their various movements of dissatisfaction – constructive and destructive – have revolutionary potential only indirectly: they shake the status quo, but cannot topple it. Their best hope lies in their increasing proletarianization: in the fact, revealed by the *Irish Times* Agricultural Correspondent (30/5/68) that increasing numbers of small farmers are taking part-time jobs. For the rest, in a revolutionary situation they must be neutralized. That is all that can be expected from them immediately, though a minority (centred on the free collectives) may be expected to become actively progressive and the small farmers' land hunger may yet be used to this effect, as Sinn Fein's Seamus Costello is hoping. In return, a Workers' Republic will ease the way for large scale collectivization: the small farmers' truest hope.

Will the Workers' Republic be Socialist? That depends on one's definition of Socialism. One can say that monopoly control of state (i.e., armed) power will be held by the workers of the towns and the workers and working-farmers of the countryside. One can say that members of these classes will control their means of income and the education of their children. The forms in which this will be done would need another book to describe. In the fullest sense, it won't be 'Socialism', but, then, that will only appear as the last stage of social development but one and on an international scale.

Of course the present opportunity may be missed. Entry to the E.E.C. may be a *fait accompli* before anything can be done. Even so, it is likely merely to intensify the contradictions in Irish society and thus, either to destroy it finally, or to create new and better opportunities to force its reform. This may take place in alliance with 'Socialist' parties of the sub-continent. Judging by the past activities of such bodies, more rewarding activity is likely to occur in conjunction with a renunciation of the Treaty of Rome – no government action can be as irrevocable as entry to the E.E.C. is said to be. But, in the long run, the Workers' Republic can be maintained and developed progressively only by alliance with other independent states among the developing, or, less likely, with the true Socialists in the European left.

But the answer remains with the working-people of Ireland. Do they want independence? As independence has been presented to them for thirty years? No! As allied with greater individual and class freedom...

There is still an Irish Question.

## EPILOGUE

SEPTEMBER 1968 - JULY 1969

The author made the final corrections to his typescript in September, 1968. He corrected the proofs in July 1969. In the meantime, there has been no qualitative change. However, within the situation, certain quantitative developments have occurred such as may start such an alteration.

They arise from the continuance of the economic status quo described in the previous chapters. The results of the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Area can be seen in the steady revival of economic bonds between the countries involved. Lynch has stated, without any show of embarrassment, that 'the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement is now the framework within which our trade is carried on'. Between 1967 and 1968 Ireland rose from being the ninth largest to being the fifth largest importer of British goods. When once again Britain found it necessary to surcharge imports, the combined Irish banks offered a subsidy of £25,000,000 to carry Irish exports thither for six months. No one is really surprised that the trade cycle is now, once again, on the up-turn; though unemployment is falling slightly, the trade gap is widening.

The Third Programme (published in March 1969) offers little to improve matters; its chief innovation on its predecessors is its plan for an incomes and prices board possessing uncertain powers. This has had an important effect. To prevent its achievement, the trade union leadership has increased its policy of appeasing the bourgeois powers. Utterances against unofficial strikes have increased. The president of the I.C.T.U. for 1968-1969, James Dunne, encouraged members of his Marine, Port and General Workers' Union to break public solidarity with maintenance craftsmen when these came out on strike for higher wages. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the Government felt able, as one of the last acts of the Eighteenth Dail, to repeal its own coercive law against strikes in the E.S.B.

This may have had a contributory effect to the major political

event of the past nine months in the twenty-six counties: the recovery of Fianna Fail from its defeat in the Referendum, and its victory in the general election in June 1969. Other contributory factors included the old trick of carrying out unpopular financial measures early, thus enabling the passing of a good, 'election' budget and, of course, the re-arrangement of constituency boundaries before the day. However, the basic factors are to be traced in the results of the three parties involved and provide a useful commentary on the analyses in Chapter VII.

Fianna Fail gained some 4,000 votes. Although it actually lost a seat from its total at the end of the Eighteenth Dail, it was returned to power with seventy-five: three more than it was given in 1965. 'Jack' Lynch has graduated from being Ireland's Douglas-Home to being Ireland's Stanley Baldwin.

It is perfectly true that, had the two opposition parties ganged up, they might have been able to replace one bourgeois Government with another. But this assumes that all those who voted Fine Gael or Labour as separate entities would have been equally ready to vote for them as potential coalition partners. There is no immediate alternative to Fianna Fail. But one should not look for one except insofar as it provides an alternative to Irish capitalism. As long as this exists, Fianna Fail has as good a claim to rule as any other body, and better than some.

The real failure of the contest was Labour's. It failed to see Fine Gael humiliated. The latter gained 23,000 votes and three seats; its triumph was to survive and nothing more. The seats it gained were mainly from Independents or had been newly created in suburban areas. It actually lost in Dublin City and west of the Shannon; worker enthusiasm for the 'Just Society' did not materialize.

Thus Fine Gael has two chances of power, neither of them very probable. It can try again to patch up an alliance with Labour or it can return to its Fascist beginning (individual members can, of course, prosper by leaving it). The signs are that it will do the latter. At the first session of the new Dail, O'Higgins attacked the Labour Party in bitter terms. A week later, Ryan commented on Declan Costello in a manner that would have been unthinkable in 1965. Only FitzGerald (now a Deputy) still seems to be ready to try to raise the drooping banner of Fine Gael 'leftism'; it is doubtful how long he will continue this politically unrewarding task.

But Fine Gael can only triumph as the vanguard of reaction if the Labour Party allows it. Whether it does so or not is still an open question.



In the general election, Labour gained 30,000 votes, but only held the same number of seats that it had held at the end of the previous Dail, a reduction of four from the twenty-two it had received in 1965.

This achievement was the result of the balance of forces within the party. So far the left wing has been able to block any tendency towards a new coalition. It has not yet been able to achieve for Labour (except in education) a policy qualitatively different to that which an Inter-Party Government would carry out. Even Connolly's demand 'The Workers' Republic' has been effectively jettisoned in favour of the 'New Republic', a totally meaningless slogan; Hitler made a 'New Republic' in his time. The result of this is that the party has to bear a policy with the same defects as are possessed by 'The Just Society'. But there is one more; the policy and its sponsors use a Socialist rhetoric that is unknown to Fine Gael but which can have no connection with 'The New Republic' and which can thus only frighten, rather than educate, the electorate. (For a further critique of 'The New Republic' see Feargus McArt's 'Labour's Scabby Programme' in *Workers' Republic* No. 23, Spring 1969). This irrationality did no more than reflect the gutlessness of the contemporary trade union bureaucrats. At the same time, the party attracted to itself a number of prominent personalities of the left (notably Cruise O'Brien, Justin Keating, and David Thornley) and of the right (Rickard Deasy, ex-President of the N.F.A.).

In these circumstances, Labour's electoral failure was natural. Some commentators have pointed to its fiascos west of the Shannon as reflecting the need for a better small farm policy, but even in Dublin more seats could have been gained had a rational answer to the Irish question been put before the public. True, the immediacy of the election reduced the time available for education; even so, with a policy on which to base such education there is no reason to suppose that Labour's gain in votes would not have exceeded the 50,000 increase of 1965; certainly it would have provided for future expansion. As it was, the celebrities made up for the defeats (with one exception: Deasy's anti-Labour speeches were too well remembered to let him be returned for his new party). It is doubtful whether excellence in the Dail is really a substitute for mass support in the country, for any Socialist party that seeks power.

Whilst politics in the twenty-six counties have developed with little real change from the position in September 1968, the state of affairs in Northern Ireland has altered far more. The discrediting,



in turn, of the I.R.A., of the different parties of the Labour movement and of the 'new liberal' Unionism of Terence O'Neill as well as the European risings of May 1968, stimulated a situation comparable to that of 'The New Departure'. Political action went into the streets through a mass movement for 'civil rights', which meant, at first, what in other states would be a very limited measure for civil liberty but what, in Northern Ireland would be political psychiatric treatment. In turn, this stimulated violent opposition from the Colon-Fascist elements with whose help the régime had been founded, but whom it now felt able to ignore.

So far, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Alliance has been doing better than its original stated aims. A Northern Irish Ombudsman has been appointed; a points system for local government housing is being encouraged; the end of the property franchise in local government is in sight. Politically, agitation and counter-agitation have resulted in the overthrow of one cabinet and the election to Westminster of the first non-Unionist M.P. for Mid-Ulster, since 1956.

That there are objections to all this cannot be denied. It is true as certain Mao-ites have pointed out that the economic reason for Unionism (the free British market) is now little different from that of the national bourgeoisie of the Republic and that the traditional sectarian discipline of northern industry is a handicap to technological development. Thus the civil liberties demands benefit objectively the Unionist bosses. However, there is no reason to presume that this (the basis for O'Neill liberalism) will mean any change in the colonial status of Northern Ireland, unless the Republic returns to 'Home Rule', Britain cuts its welfare subsidies to the Irish level or there is a wider settlement based on the common market. Welfare levels rather than religion divides north and south, despite their local oligarchs and Britain will not lose its bases by cutting subsidies. Secondly the after-effects of Orange tactics have been stimulated into inspiring a strong Colon-Fascist movement centred on Ian Paisley; this provides a counter-balance to civil rights affecting Unionist policy. A draconian revision of the Public Order Act has been introduced as well as civil liberty measures; O'Neill has had to resign. But Paisley is only likely to become a serious contender for state power if the left-wing (People's Democracy) of the Civil Rights movement which recognizes, confusedly, that the problem goes beyond civil liberties becomes a serious threat, rather than a nuisance.

For the future in Northern Ireland, there are, thus, three main possibilities. The most likely one is that the liberal Unionists and

the conservative (civil liberty) civil rightists will be united at the time of the next general election; their objective interests are those of Northern Ireland capitalism: even more, of its British masters. The next possibility is that the People's Democracy will influence enough to become a threat but not enough to take power; as yet, it is too opportunist and superficial in its theory, at a time when clarity of analysis of vital importance. Its failure would mean a Paisleyite dictatorship. Nothing can be expected from Britain, or (until too late) the Republic in such a case. The least likely, as yet, is that the People's Democracy overcomes its internal weaknesses and achieves state power under the slogan of 'The Northern Irish Workers' Republic' (fully independent of Britain). In such a case (to paraphrase James Connolly) 'Northern Ireland may yet set the torch to a European conflagration that will not burn out until the last throne and the last capitalist bond and debenture will be shrivelled on the funeral pyre of the last war lord'.

## APPENDIX

### MEMORANDUM FOR A SOCIALIST PROGRAMME FOR THE IRISH LABOUR PARTY

*The People have voted Sinn Fein; we must teach them what Sinn Fein is* – Fr Michael O'Flanagan, after the 1918 General Election.

The East Limerick bye-election results is a tribute to hard work and a good candidate, in a contest in which large numbers of people are seeking a qualitatively more radical alternative to the present situation. This fact focuses a light on the major gap in the Labour Party at present; the absence of clarity in the posing of that alternative.

Mr Michael Lipper, the Labour Candidate in East Limerick is said to regard Socialism as a matter of 'more housing, health and welfare services and employment'. Whatever one's feelings, one must recognize that this alone cannot provide a total policy for a Socialist Government. Unfortunately, it is also true that this has not been understood by past Labour leaders. Irish Social Democracy is arguably the most opportunist (and, hence amongst the least successful) in the world to-day. The promotion of a programme for it provides the opportunity for ending this state of affairs.

What are we trying to avoid? The opportunist attitude is a natural one in the light of Irish history, which has more than its fair share of political revolutions, and less than its fair share of social ones. Generally speaking, its advocates consider (or act as if they considered ) that social defects, are, in fact, governmental ones.

This concept tends to mean, in practice, that a change of Government must mean a qualitative change in society. From this, it is a natural development to inter-Partyism and to the attitude typified by Bernstein's 'The aims are nothing, the movement is everything'.

As a matter of fact, the assumption could not be further from the truth. A change in Government will only mean a qualitative change in society if the new body has the determination and scientific knowledge necessary to that change. A Government that

limits itself to change (however far-reaching) in the social superstructure is likely to find itself prevented by the infrastructure from carrying out similar plans later on.

The weakness of Irish society must be seen as a whole. This means recognizing the class nature of the said society both within itself and within the context of imperialism.

Ireland is a neo-colony in a North Atlantic context. This is to say that, whereas the Irish geo-position is neo-colonial (it is exploited by Britain in an imperialist manner) it shares with the imperialist and declining imperialist powers certain internal structural peculiarities that distinguishes it from states of a similar kind elsewhere.

Irish subordination to imperialism developed differently from the subordination of other states because it developed more slowly. Its basic form was settled in the earliest stages of the imperialist epoch (c. 1881) and in a manner that enabled its capitalists to act as partners in imperialist exploitation at the same time as their country was one of its victims. Ireland's importance to world capitalism is, traditionally, that of a seller of primary products on inferior terms, rather than as a centre of investment (though the liquidation of certain Irish sources of investment did imperil its primary role for a time). Judged in terms of capital movements, Ireland is, in fact, a creditor country.

All this has helped ensure that Ireland is part of the North Atlantic World in its social superstructure as in its geographical position within the world economy to be that of the classic imperial bourgeois democracy. The agrarian question is solved effectively if inadequately. There is no lumpenproletariat comparable to that of the shanty towns of Afro-Asia and Latin America. These facts must be remembered in any attack that is to be mounted on imperialism through Ireland.

The prospects for such an attack are as good as they have ever been. The increasing contradictions of imperialism: overproduction, chaotic investment, its counter-balancing by national and socialistic movements have led to its enforced contraction against its need for expansion. A higher rate of exploitation has to be imposed on the areas that are still subordinate. Irish (twenty-six county) capitalism which was able in the second quarter of the twentieth century, to pose as an independent unit, finds its position within the world economy to be that of the classic imperial fief. The Control of Manufactures Acts are repealed; self-sufficiency is renounced. Irish capitalism as a whole approaches the 'Quisling' phase that was once limited to six of the island's counties.

The essential preconditions for 'Quisling-ism' are these: an increasing subordination to imperialism under cover of a cosmopolitan first part of this is obvious at all levels. The internal repression deserves a greater amount of analysis.

The status quo of the treaty settlement has been maintained through an alliance of elites: altar, till and filing cabinet. Irish capitalism, unable to exist without its external connections, has found itself similarly unprepared for a clear dominance of the internal scene. Religion in Ireland has been able to fulfil its duty as dope for the masses even to the point where it limits the efficiency of productive techniques. The bureaucracy's powers are little changed since the Union: in certain matters, such as local government, they have been increased.

However, as the pressures on and within imperialism, have increased; so have the external pressures on Irish capitalism and, so, too, have the strains on the relationship between the component interests of the Irish establishment. The Church's dominance of education is now proving a serious handicap to technical advancement. The bureaucracy sees the means of Irish economic salvation as being in the bureaucratic plan co-ordinated with the officialdom of Western Europe. Irish capitalists have, naturally, been able to enforce against this their ideals of greater anarchy, and closer ties with monopoly capital. These disagreements are further complicated by the fact that no member of the ruling elite is prepared to push them to a crisis. The three bodies must still be allies against their exploitees. Hence the power of the Church is attacked in the realm of censorship and in the university question (indirectly) but in primary education only on administrative aspects. Hence the Government has to pay lipservice to entry to the E.E.C. and to 'Planning' although it cannot enter the first without Britain nor can it operate the second while it accepts the neo-Colonial logic of its capitalism.

In the six counties, matters are quantitatively different. In the first place, the regime there has always been one of a Quisling nature. In the second place, religious influence in Northern Ireland is of an hegemonic rather than an institutional, monolithic, nature. The regime is maintained by a religious hostility to the monolithic church of what, in the six counties, is the minority.

This being said, the stresses of the north-eastern establishment are qualitatively the same as those in the Republic. There is evidence of disagreements between bourgeois and bureaucrat. At the same time, the increasing need for external capital forces the regime, more than ever before, to tone down the cruder evidences



of the real nature of its power.

Thus both sides of the border, the Irish establishment is developing within itself more serious contradictions than before. At the same time, the forces are being strengthened for an effective attack on it.

There has been a steady contraction operating amongst the petty bourgeoisie both of the towns (smaller businessmen) and of the country (gombeenmen and small farmers). There has been an equally steady growth of the proletariat. It would be wrong to declare that this has led to a qualitative change in the composition of Irish society over the past forty years. What is true is that it is one factor making for a qualitative change in Irish social aspirations. The tradesman is finding it more difficult than before to set up on his own: the small farmer is being offered a choice of changes: he can take a proletarian job, live off the dole, join a co-operative or emigrate. Although the petty bourgeois survives, his hopes are dying. It has been these hopes that have distracted the Irish left from success in liberating the exploited classes.

Yet if the objective prospects are good, there is one omission from them that weakens their significance. Nowhere is there any immediate prospect of a force appearing capable of developing the new discontent and exposing the regime's contradictions so as to establish the thirty-two county workers' republic. The political Labour movement is divided both in its right (majority) wing (the Labour parties) and its minority (Stalinist) wing, along the line of the border. The Republican Movement is not so split and it is showing increasing and welcome signs of Socialist feeling, but it is still, as yet, Left Opportunist and there is reason to fear that it will never develop beyond this stage. Above all, no Irish body has presented a serious scientific analysis of the Irish situation as a whole in its present phase. The so-called theoreticians of the Irish left think that by quoting Connolly they are somehow reincarnating him. In practice, few, if any, of them even match the stature of the late William Walker. Were there any prospect of it being put into operation, the first proposal of this programme would be to burn all Irish political writing of the past fifty-odd years.

In this political desert, the need for clarity in analysis to back energy in action cannot be restated too often. It is claimed that the following ten proposals are based on such analysis the fruits of which have been presented already.

Certain points about them must be made. In the first place the policy we are presenting is a war policy geared to an immediate task: the destruction of Irish capitalism and its imperialist links.

That this will take a considerable effort is recognized. Accordingly, the programme does not include economic plans or promises for increases in welfare or in economic growth. Rather it recognizes that the only pre-condition for the secure fulfilment of such schemes is the establishment of the Workers' Republic by the policy outlined.

In the second place, this programme is put forward primarily for discussion within the Irish Labour Party. That this is done makes no concessions to the idea of that party's Socialism; it merely recognizes that it is the largest explicitly proletarian-based party in the country. This gives us the immediate chance of the largest possible support both within the party and (because of the greater publicity afforded the party) outside it. However, it does not give us the right to renounce our duty to break with it when it is obvious that it is acting as a brake on the development of Irish Socialism.

The first call on anyone drawing up a Socialist programme must be to insure its protection and the means to achieve it against any bourgeois opposition.

We are of course, aware of the present actions of the Irish Republican Army in the first field, at least. However, we are also aware that this body has carried out such tactics on previous occasions (as in the 1930's) subsequent to equivalent periods of social quiescence. The fact is that the national issue does not necessarily provide a sufficient motivation for ensuring the destruction of imperialism. The Irish working class *per se* must have its own militia for it to use in its own interests even despite the subjective demands of the petty-bourgeoisie of the Republican movement.

Accordingly, we demand as the first proposal of our policy:

*'That the Council of Labour sponsor a thirty-two counties Citizen Army to support all working-class and objectively anti-imperialist activities whenever they require such support and to provide the basis for the destruction of the bourgeois state machine north and south; that if the council of Irish Labour fail to agree to take this course within a year, the Irish Labour Party do so unilaterally'.*

Secondly, in order to ensure that the workers state power be uninvolved with imperialist links whether at home or abroad we demand: —

*'That all secrets now kept by the bourgeois state powers be made public; and that the Special Branch be abolished'.*

Thirdly we insist that the workers' republic represent as democratic a regime as has ever been known. To ensure this, without

jeopardizing its existence, we propose:—

*'That control of fire arms be restructured to workers (other than known class-traitors) and party and Citizen Army members. That, this being done, the initiative (or spontaneous grass-roots legislative power) be a recognized part of the state machine, that all public officials and representatives be subject to recall for re-election/appointment by the electorate, that local elections be held annually; that all bye-elections involve all representatives for the electoral area concerned; that co-option for local councils be ended, and that all public privileges at present based on property be open to all'.*

The above proposals cover by themselves, a limited field. Their importance is really as protection for the social changes that must be enacted with them.

Our first demands in this broader sphere of qualitative social changes are for the clearing away of the hangover of feudalism in Ireland and for the improving thereby of the objective conditions for rural living and environment planning.

We therefore make two demands *'For the nationalization of all ground, river and sea rights, without compensation and the transference of all such rents to the state'*

*'For the nationalization and collectivization of all estates over a certain viability figure'*

In putting forward these demands (and also the following) we give our full support to all spontaneous attempts to anticipate them.

The above statement also applies to our demands in the industrial sphere.

Here clear recognition of the needs of the situation is essential. In place of the rule of thumb proposals for nationalization of 'the commanding heights of the economy' of 'industries failing the nation' (to a Socialist private enterprise as such has failed the nation) on the one hand of the picking out of certain obviously unpopular firms (such as in milling) for expropriation on the other, we offer certain basic criteria for the task.

In the first place, we appreciate that the present centres of imperialist influence (the banks, insurance companies and other credit bodies and all foreign firms) must be eliminated.

In the second sphere we recognize the necessity for a state monopoly of Ireland's traditional economic connections with the world market (the exporting firms and agencies).

Thirdly, we note that even after the above, there will still remain certain strongholds of capitalism in Ireland. In the present

epoch, these can only act as an economic fifth column. Accordingly it will be necessary to nationalize the fifty largest Irish private firms and all transport, power and public utility and service firms.

Thus we propose:—

*'That the following categories of company be nationalized:*

- 1. All banks, insurance companies, building societies and other major suppliers of and dealers in credit.*
- 2. All remaining private transport and carriage power, public utility and service firms.*
- 3. All foreign companies operating or registered in Ireland.*
- 4. All exporting companies and agencies.*
- 5. The fifty largest Irish companies.'*

However, the form of nationalization is as important as its fact. Bureaucratic interests must not be allowed to develop within the workers' state machine.

At the same time, the remaining private firms must have their potentialities as centres of opposition to Socialism curbed. To this end, we put forward the following: —

*'That all nationalized concerns be placed under the management of their workers and that in all private firms the workers should be given a measure of control over the books'.*

These structural alternations in Irish society cannot by themselves dictate the form of the policies to be pursued within the new structure. However certain demands must be made if the basic advantages presented by the change are to be immediately and fully taken.

The problem of unemployment cannot be eliminated promptly by traditional capitalist means, even in a workers' social structure, but such a structure can be used to eliminate unemployment by means unavailable to the capitalist state.

Similarly, the general forms of wages, salaries, pensions and welfare benefits cannot be ended with the removal of imperialist influences, but the ending of such pressures does provide the opportunity for rationalizing these payments in a just manner.

Accordingly we urge: —

*'That to avoid unemployment, a sliding scale of wages and hours be instituted subject to a minimum rate, neither to discriminate between the sexes'.*

*'That all pensions and other welfare benefits be geared to the new wage structure; that education be free to the highest level and a free National Health Service be instituted'*

Finally, if the Workers' Republic is to maintain its position, the hostile role of religion must be recognized and neutralized. The most definite reform in this sphere must be the giving of the schools to the people (which is no more than Connolly was demanding in 1896): Accordingly, we demand:

*'That all schools be under direct control of the local councils'*

It is only acceptance of the above demands that will ensure the Workers' Republic in Ireland.

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2/7/68

15 Hume Street, Dublin 2.



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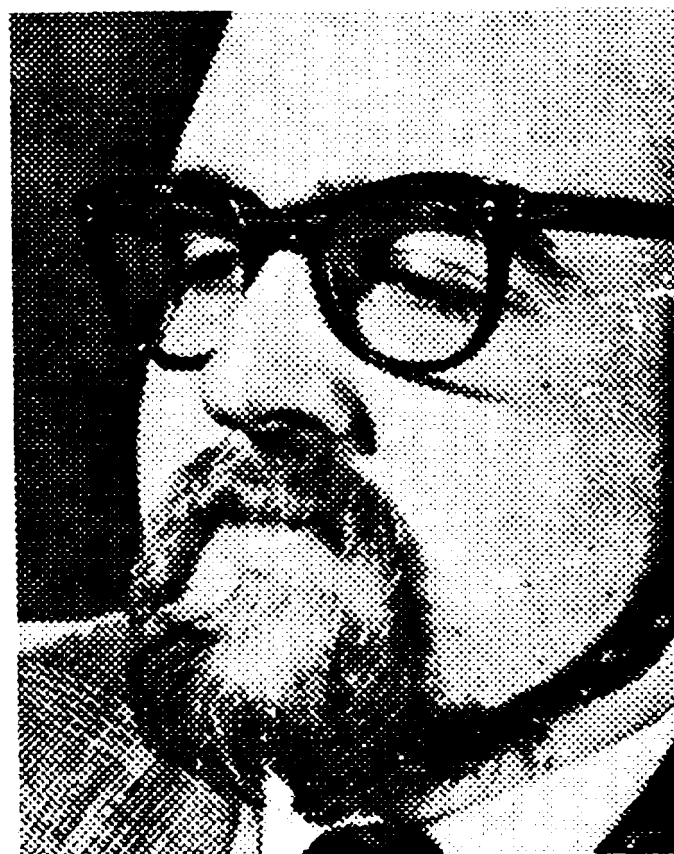
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THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND starts where Connolly's LABOUR IN IRISH HISTORY left off. There have been many books dealing with the history of the Irish state since it came into being: this is the first to be conceived and written from a Socialist point of view. In his own words, Lysaght was moved to write 'partly (as a historian) by the sheer badness of ninety-nine per cent of Irish historiography on the pre 1916 period: partly (as a political scientist) by the lack of any attempt to analyse deeply the social structure of Ireland.'

The book begins by analysing Irish society up to the Famine, evaluating what the author calls 'the bourgeois historical myths of the period – Gaelic Ireland, Grattan's Parliament, and Daniel O'Connell.' Having thus set his own terms of reference, Mr Lysaght continues through the period between 1847 and 1910; studies in depth 'the Revolution Subverted' – between 1910 and 1923; discusses the Cosgrave Administration and the De Valera regime; and then deals with the Inter Party Governments and developments under the post 1957 Fianna Fail Governments. He considers throughout the economic and sociological interaction of certain key elements in the State: the petty bourgeoisie, the Church, the small farmers – and, of course, organized labour. At the end of the book he offers an appendix that is at once a comment on the past and a positive programme for the future.

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